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BAILING WITH A TEASPOON

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Douglas V. Duff

BAILING WITH A TEASPOON

by
DOUGLAS V. DUFF

With 26 Illustrations



JOHN LONG LIMITED

LONDON * NEW YORK * TORONTO
MELBOURNE * SYDNEY * CAPE TOWN

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To
DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER
34th President of the United States.

Gentleman.

Great, as a Christian general, as were
Godfrey, Tancred, and Adhemar,
Princes of the First Crusade

*"A soldier's pack is less burdensome than
a prisoner's chains."*

(Inaugural Speech, Jan. 20th, 1953).

*“Blessed be the Lord my strength,
which teacheth my hands to war, and
my fingers to fight.”*

Psalm cxliv, 1

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Among the multitude of our ancestors who quitted their familiar, known world at the end of the eleventh century and marched, weapon in hand, into Asia to deliver Christ's Tomb in Jerusalem from the Muslim, was a simple Norman gentleman. He held a junior command, he fought and rode in the ranks, but he was noteworthy because, although he was a layman, he was able to read and write.

He kept a campaign-diary in which he noted all that he saw and did and heard. The book he wrote has survived but his name is lost, so that he is usually called "The Anonymous Knight". His chronicle, the *Gesta Francorum*, is one of the most valuable historical documents of the Crusading era, because it sheds a brilliant light on what the ordinary man thought of the great events in which he was participating.

The Anonymous Knight is my inspiration to describe, from the viewpoint of a man holding very much the same position as his, a later Crusade, the Thirty Years' Crusade of 1918-48, or, rather, its first ten years, in which I had the honour to play a small part in the armed forces of the Holy Land. During that first decade a few score Western men-at-arms (our title was Gendarmerie), assisted by some hundreds of local police, held the peace of the Holy Land and defended its borders more effectively than did a quarter of a million British Imperial troops, British police and local constabulary in the last ten of the thirty years.

High policies, devious politics, diplomatic lying and other great matters are no concern of mine, any more than they were of the Anonymous Knight. Their effects have been described too often in too many books attacking or defending the principal actors. But, like my model, I was neither blind nor deaf to the significance of what I saw; I noted those I saw myself, just as he did over 800 years before. Amazingly, the same causes appear to have wreaked the same ruin, though our Crusade lasted less than one-sixth of the time that his did.

The Mediaeval Crusade may seem dim and distant, yet a brief sketch of it must be given if the background to my tale is to be appreciated.

1095. Pope Urban the Second preached the Holy War, urging the leaders to take their armies into Syria and Palestine to regain the Holy Sepulchre. Some of the greatest nobles, such as Duke Godfrey of Bouillon,

his kinsmen Baldwin of Flanders and Baldwin de Burgh, Robert Short-breeches, son of William the Conqueror and Duke of Normandy, along with his sister Adela's husband, Stephen of Blois, Bohemund the Norman from Sicily with his nephew, Tancred, Raymund St. Gilles Count of Provence, Edgar the Aethling, the rightful King of England, and many others, mustered the Cross-wearers and led them across Europe to Constantinople. They marched from that Imperial city, the seat of the Eastern Emperor, down through Asia Minor and across the Taurus Mountains, over the walls of Antioch, until the survivors of battle, hardship and disease, on

July 15th, 1099, St. Swithun's Day, stormed over the battlements of Jerusalem. They massacred the Muslim inhabitants and, "*weeping from excess of joy, red from the wine-press of the Lord*", thronged into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to give thanks to God for the accomplishment of the vow which had brought them from their homes. They set up a model feudal kingdom, sharing the conquered land between themselves, which maintained a most precarious existence, always dependent on fresh reinforcements from the West, for a few days less than eighty-eight years.

July 4th, 1187, saw the Emir Saladin, at the head of a united Islam, smash the Crusading Kingdom on the Horns of Hattin, the Mount on which Christ preached His Sermon, a saddle-shaped hill above the blue waters of the Sea of Galilee. Guy of Lusignan, King of Jerusalem, was taken prisoner and the flower of his feudal forces lay dead on the burned scrub of the battlefield. The shock of the loss of Holy Sepulchre—for Jerusalem and every castle and town, except Tyre, was taken by the Muslim in the weeks that followed—roused the monarchs of the West.

1191 saw the arrivals of Richard Lion-heart of England, Philip Augustus of France, Archduke Leopold of Austria, the Germans following Kaiser Frederick Barbarossa, who died on the journey, and many others who swarmed into the Holy Land, determined to regain Christ's Tomb.

They failed. Utterly. Through their own greeds, suspicions and jealousies of one another. The small part of the Holy Land they did regain was re-established as the Crusading Kingdom, and had its capital in St. John of Acre, two of whose curtain walls stand in the surf of the Mediterranean. The Principality of Antioch and the County of Tripoli had weathered the storm and were reunited under the King of Jerusalem.

It lasted for almost exactly another century. Rent by civil wars and rebellions, with the great Military Orders often waging warfare against each other, nobles and kings at variance, antagonistic pretenders to the crown and bitter mercantile rivalries, it managed to linger for almost 100 years.

The name "Crusade" was prostituted to cover sordid struggles for secular power both in Europe and Asia. The most flagrant example of this was when the mighty armaments of the Fourth Expedition were cynically diverted to conquer the Christian Empire of Constantinople. One nearly as distasteful came when the Emperor Frederick the Second obtained the cession of part of Jerusalem for fifteen years by treaty, at the same time that, in his own country, the Papacy had proclaimed a Crusade against him.

The sunset splendours of the Crusade of St. Louis of France (1249-54) had scarcely dimmed before the ruin of the Kingdom set in with increasing haste. One after the other, Antioch, Tripoli and the castles of the Royal Domain were taken and dismantled, its armies defeated in the field. Internal feuds remained so virulent between the Westerners that they failed to hold St. John of Acre itself.

August 14th, 1291, the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, saw the last Crusaders, the Knights Templar garrisoning their Order's great fortress, Castle Pilgrim, whose wreck still dominates the beaches south of Haifa, steal aboard their ships in the darkness of night. After 192 years, all but thirty days, the Mediaeval Crusade in the Holy Land was ended.

The West had grown so chilled to the old call to save Jerusalem that even that catastrophe roused no real response. The theory of the Crusade, however, persisted long after its practice was dead, and was used for centuries to gild the most dubious enterprises.

Its spirit lived on in the wars against the Spanish Moors; among the Hospitallers manning their warships in Rhodes and Malta. In 1444 Cardinal Caeserini led a small Crusader army down the Danube Valley against the Turks, only to be smashed at Varna. Nine years after that battle Constantinople was taken by the Muslim; a crowning disaster that caused as little stir in the West as did the expulsion of the Crusaders 161 years before.

Christopher Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Alburqueque and the other Latin explorers sincerely believed they were helping in the recovery of the Holy Land. They wore the red cross on their shoulders and painted it on their mainsails. Czarist Russia, too, had a Crusading flavour in its constant moves towards regaining Constantinople from the Turks. Napoleon Bonaparte and Napoleon the Third, both of whom had armies in the Holy Land, flaunted their Crusading motives.

On *December 9th*, 1917, Lord Allenby walked through the Jaffa Gate of Jerusalem and the Red Cross of St. George was once more in the wind above the Castle of the Pisans, which, with the three massive towers that Titus spared, covers the ancient Citadel of King Herod.

For thirty years it remained aloft, only to be hauled down, just as the flag of France had been lowered a few months previously, and the Thirty Years' Crusade ended in shame and defeat for much the same reasons as the Mediaeval one had done.

But Palestine is not at the end of her bloodstained history. She remains the cross-roads of the world, the bridge where East and West meet, the land of the Holy Places of three great Faiths. A new chapter has opened with the return of one of her ancient peoples to occupy a strip of territory which is, almost exactly, the same as that held during the latter days of the Crusading Monarchy. What its fate will be no man can foretell—especially anyone who has seen the ruins of a dozen empires and races, who once thought their dominion over the hills and plains of the Holy Land was eternal, littering its grey mountain-sides, or the bare mounds which were proud cities many centuries ago.

If I can play the part of the Anonymous Knight by preserving the memory of the type of men we were who executed his duties, eight and a half centuries after him, I shall have done my part.

DOUGLAS V. DUFF

Book I

GUARDIANS OF SEA AND SHORE

THE MANNER OF MEN WE WERE

ONE Sunday morning, at the end of April 1922, 650 British gendarmes, men-at-arms, stepped on to the dusty little jetty near Haifa Railway Yards. They were the first Westerners, *embodied for exclusive service in Palestine, and nowhere else*, to land since St. John of Acre fell to the Crescent in May, A.D. 1291. We were the first armed Christians sworn to no other service than to guard the borders of Palestine and to maintain peace within them, since the Knights Templar stole away in midnight's darkness from Castle Pilgrim, a few weeks after Acre fell.

The Holy Places, and free access to them by all men on their lawful occasions, were our responsibilities. For the first time since the days of Edward the First, British men-at-arms, other than members of her Imperial Forces, stepped ashore in Palestine. In that glorious enterprise we were unique.

I was one of the youngest men in the Gendarmerie, for I was still not quite twenty-one, but I was just as much a veteran as any of my hard-bitten comrades. I was a cadet aboard that grand old wooden dam of sailormen, the school-ship H.M.S. *Conway*, until I went to sea; before I was sixteen I was the sole survivor of the old *Thracia*, torpedoed and sunk in the Bay of Biscay in March 1917.

During the twenty-six hours that I spent after *Thracia* sank, on the bottom half of the starboard lifeboat, blown out of its davit-falls by the blast of the torpedo's explosion, I made a compact with the Lord God that, should I survive the War, I would become His man and serve Him in the cloister. I kept my promise, and I am glad that I did.

After another sinking, this time in 1918, and learning a great deal about human nature, in South Russia and elsewhere, I entered the noviciate of a teaching Order in England. Twenty months later I reached the eve of taking my temporary vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience and found I could go no further. I left the noviciate one Monday, with a railway ticket to London and three-and-sixpence in my pocket. On the Friday of that same week I was a member of a Royal Irish Constabulary patrol ambushed in Grafton Street, Dublin. A bomb was thrown at our motor-tender, two men were hurt and we fought our attackers for some minutes.

Most of my service in the R.I.C. was in Galway City, where I saw a great deal of what civil war means. There is nothing more beastly, as I had already learned in the Ukraine and the Crimea. We had several fights with the gallant men of the Irish Republican Army in the bogs, and on the mountain-sides of Connemara, before Ireland won her freedom and the Royal Irish Constabulary was disbanded. I was given a pension because I was a "regular", and at Christmastide I still find that pension extremely useful. Before we left Ireland I put my name on a list calling for volunteers for a new Force, the Palestine Gendarmerie, which the gods in Whitehall proposed to raise.

I had decided, sanely and coolly, that the only trade open to me was that of the Free Companion, of the mercenary soldier who is ready to fight for any side not engaged in warfare against his own country, so long as he is well paid. I was too old to return to sea to finish my cadetship as I was three years behind my contemporaries. I had no other trade or profession, and if I stayed at home I could find employment only in the ranks of the unskilled. Worse, there would be naught but lifelong subordination to people for whom I should have little respect and the prospect of a humdrum life of soul-grinding respectability. I had, and have, no desire to enter a groove whose sides continue to grow ever higher and higher until, one day, I should find a blank wall barring the end of my rut and realize, too late, that I was in my grave, with only the memories of the days before I was twenty to prove to myself that I had ever lived.

I had served a considerable apprenticeship to the art of war. That was my only commercial asset, and I believed I should be a fool to subscribe to the popular delusion that experience in warfare is merely wasted time.

My father helped me, deeply though he had been grieved by my rejection of the sea and my entry of the cloister. There is a tradition of mercenary service in our family. Generations of Duffs have served in practically every army and navy in the world, and my father had done more than his fair share. He commanded his own ship at twenty-one; before he was twenty-seven he had won Lloyd's Medal for saving her when, by all reasonable standards, she was lost. He was employed in a dozen armies and half a score of navies, mostly those of South American countries at the end of the century. He was wounded at Gallipoli, where he was a lieutenant-commander, so badly that he was discharged from the Royal Navy as medically unfit, but a year after that he was once more seriously wounded in Flanders, while serving as a major of Royal Engineers.

At the turn of the century he was a cavalry leader in the horde of some

Chinese war-lord. One day, when he was very old, he told me that I had been within an ace of being born a half-breed Chinese, for he had left that service in a hurry—and in the company of the war-lord's favourite daughter. If she had not died the day after they had reached a Treaty Port, she might have been my mother, as they were determined to marry. As it is, I was born, of British parents on both sides, in the Argentine, and I proudly own Sir Roger Casement as my godfather. May his gallant soul rest in peace!

My father approved my joining the Palestine Gendarmerie, saying that the experience I might gain in it, added to what I had already learned in Ireland and at sea, would make me fit, by the time I was twenty-three, to quit the Holy Land and go to the Argentine to do my conscript service. That service would give me back my Spanish and allow enough time to weigh up the South American situation and so gauge the best market in which to employ my hireling sword.

He was right about the lessons I could learn in the Palestine Gendarmerie, for there never has been such a Force before, and I doubt if ever there can be its like again. Ninety-five per cent of our rankers had held His Majesty's Commission in the First War (which ended only three and a half years earlier) and nearly all had served in the different formations of the Royal Irish Constabulary. In composition and spirit the Gendarmerie was very little different from those bodies of armed men who sailed for Palestine during the thirteenth century, after the first unselfish Crusading fervour had chilled, for, like them, we were seeking new opportunities or oblivion; we were either tired of our own countries or they were heartily sick of us.

We had Irishmen in our ranks for whom there was no home in Ireland under the new dispensation, as well as men genuinely anxious to make constabulary work their careers. Many were utterly incapable of settling down to a quiet routine after our taste of excitement. There were several remittance-men who received fairly large sums each quarter-day on the one condition that they should never return to Britain. I knew of two excommunicated Roman priests; of one (and probably two more) who had once been clergy of the Anglican Church or Nonconformist divines. There was one man who had been a famous surgeon until he broke the eleventh commandment while he was helping some woman to rid herself of an unwanted foetus; several solicitors whose names no longer appeared on the Rolls. There was an American sergeant who admitted, when he was full of rye whisky, that he had been sentenced to death in Mexico and had got away only by the favour of an elderly officer's young wife. A naturalized Russian driver in Headquarters Transport was a quiet, mild fellow except when he

got hold of a bottle of vodka (which was as often as possible), whereupon he would attempt to do violent murder on anyone who failed to address him as "Highness".

Of medals and decorations we owned bushels. Probably there have never been so many D.S.O.s, D.C.M.s, D.S.C.s, M.C.s, A.F.C.s and their equivalent medals, in addition to foreign Orders, in such close proximity before.

The Palestine Gendarmerie was, in many ways, a Legion of the Lost; in my own platoon there was a man older than the rest of us, an ex-brigadier-general whose section-corporal was once his brigade-major in Flanders. A sergeant in our neighbouring platoon had been a commander, Royal Navy. The sanitary-orderly of the same platoon had worn the scarlet tunic and black bearskin of an officer in the Brigade of Guards, and, when he was drunk, displayed three high decorations on his khaki tunic.

I could state a hundred similar cases to show what sort of men served in the "first-year" Palestine Gendarmerie, but these should be sufficient to prove that we were unique, both in composition and in mission. Ours was a great honour, and though little was said, I believe that most of us realized the true significance of what we were doing when we clambered, at the end of an unpleasant voyage, out of our flat barges on to the coal-dust-coated jetty of Haifa that morning in the April of 1922.

We rejoiced to be clear of the small ship where we had lived in conditions almost as bad as those in a Red Sea pilgrim vessel and were aching to set foot on the green and pleasant-looking land we saw.

We were shepherded into second-class railway carriages, in which we sat and sweltered in our thick serge uniforms for some hours until, with a prodigious amount of whistling and shouting, the train moved along the jetty a couple of hundred feet into the marshalling yards.

There we spent another three hours before we were again on the move. We did not stop until we reached Lydda, the junction for Jerusalem and Jaffa. Our destination was a military camp, Sarafand-el-Amar, three miles from Lydda, but we endured another hour's delay before we halted at last astride a level-crossing on the main Jerusalem-Jaffa road, where a detachment of red-sashed Arab troops, along with a band in Indian Army uniform, were on parade.

We were told that we were to be welcomed by the Inspector-General of the Palestine Public Security Forces and a guard of honour of the native section of the Gendarmerie. That there was such a Force at all was news to us, but we looked with professional interest at the red-sashed Arab warriors

and approved of their soldierly bearing. The band started to play, but before any of us could alight a whistle blew and the train lurched a quarter of a mile farther up the line. A group of perspiring British officers led a wild dash by the red-sashed troopers and the Indian Army band in hot pursuit of the train. When it halted they were still 100 yards astern, but they arrived and had started to "fall in" to accord us the appropriate honours, when the whistle shrilled once more and back we rumbled to our original halting-place.

The guard of honour, in their high riding-boots and long-skirted khaki tunics, rushed madly back again through the sand and were already "at the slope" to give our Commandant his due salute, when off went the train once more, this time easterly towards Lydda. The Indian band patiently lowered its instruments and the British officer in command of the guard of honour resignedly stood his men at ease until the train chugged back. Eventually we got through the formalities, and the Inspector-General, a fine officer named Bramley, gave us a brief and soldierly welcome.

In columns of fours we trudged along a dusty road and up a dustier side lane until we came to a breach in a very rusty barbed-wire apron fence. Beyond it, across the sand, were a few decrepit wooden huts and a dozen tents pitched on a square space, cleared of cactus, with a couple of rotting goal-posts to show that it had once been a football-ground. On the hill above were the horse-lines and hutments of an Indian cavalry regiment. With the band blaring ahead we trudged, in our thick serge, across the sand, most of us as dry as limekilns after our long fast from food and water.

My platoon, along with four others, halted in the middle of the football-pitch, where we were stood at ease. The dozen or so sagging tents standing forlornly on the touch-line were filled by our transport platoon, but we stayed where we were, fresh from England, under the burning sun of the Holy Land, up to our ankles in soft yellow sand.

We shared a tin of bully-beef from our haversacks between each two men, and had a packet of biscuits apiece, still sitting on the hot sand, under the merciless sun, with no chance of shade. Finally, after another three hours, we were told that this open space was our camp, whereupon we marched to the quartermaster's stores to receive three blankets apiece. No one said much. I think we all realized that hardships were to be expected until matters ironed themselves out; we ate the other tin of bully and laid out our blankets in the sand, brewing a "fanny" of tea on primus stoves.

Most of us were very glad when Réveillé sounded, for there were various vermin in the well-trodden sand. During the next day we were given some

fatigue duties, but discomfort was intense, unacclimatized as we were, clad in thick, perspiration-soaked serge, with no chance to bathe, and deprived of all shade except the stuffy shadow thrown by our blankets supported on "pull-throughs" suspended between pickshafts, or from the piles of rifles.

Food was served from two mobile field-kitchens half a mile away, cooked by Berberines who showed their open contempt for us. It ended disastrously, with a couple of the dark-skinned cooks being stuck, head first, into dioxies of hot stew, while their confederates scattered in panic all over the sand-hills.

Our own platoon officer was one of the few who had any control over his disgruntled and angry men. From the very start this Scots-Canadian, James K. Munro, did his best for us. We knew of his distinguished career in Ireland, where he had, at the cost of being severely wounded, saved one of his men who was lying wounded and exposed to intense rifle-fire, after an ambush in a peat-bog in County Mayo.

Despite all the gross mismanagement and inefficiency which had set us down, in peace-time, in a strange climate to sleep under the drenching dew of the Philistian Plain, there was little grumbling among the men of "F" Platoon. Munro, our C.O., came into our lines on that second night and explained that there would be no breakfast, the Berberine cooks being too scared to work for the Gendarmerie. He asked for volunteers to man the field-kitchen and three of us said we would do so.

One was a little Scotsman from Motherwell who had won the Distinguished Conduct Medal in Flanders before he was eighteen and, commissioned on the field a few weeks later, gained a Military Cross as a captain in a famous Highland regiment. The second amateur cook was a Welshman and a baronet, with no less than three Military Crosses and a record of commanding a battalion on the Western Front for over a year during that First War. I was the third and, by mutual agreement, I was raised to the dignity of chief cook, because, having been bred to the sea, I presumably knew a little about many things.

We were up before dawn to get the fires going. There was plenty of food, the only difficulty being to make it palatable. By seven we had porridge, eggs and bacon with fried bread, for 300 men ready on our field-kitchen, which was parked in deep sand between two decaying Nissen huts.

Trouble started as soon as the men came for their meal. They were angry because they were forced to parade and march a considerable distance across soft sand. All were feeling the growing heat in their heavy uniforms, while most had the commencement of prickly heat on their bodies.

Both my confederates, "Jock" and "Taffy", were smallish men, whereas

I am a bit of an outsize and very burly, which was extremely useful, as our customers were obviously looking for trouble. We cooks seemed heaven-sent scapegoats, and we knew it. Let me explain that I am not fond of danger, and I get very scared when it approaches. But—and this is the foolishness of it—I am far more of a moral coward than a physical one, for I am very afraid of others knowing that I *am* afraid. Consequently, I have done many very silly things in order to prove to the people around me that I am not frightened. I had made arrangements for dealing with such a situation if it turned nasty and we three had rehearsed our drill. Under the six-foot table from which we were issuing breakfasts to the men who shuffled by in the dry, powdery sand, a dixie of water was boiling over a primus stove. In it was an extremely large cooking-ladle.

Jock was issuing porridge when the man receiving it asked him what he thought the so-and-so muck was meant to be. The Scotsman replied heatedly that porridge was as good as any food in the world, whereupon the recipient said something unpardonable about all sons born of unmarried Caledonian mothers and threw the contents of his tin mug straight into Jock's face. I promptly snatched the big ladle standing in the boiling dixie and smote the aggressor on the side of his skull.

He was a very big chap. I was glad of that; it would not have done to use such a weapon on someone smaller than myself. He was violently unpopular. He picked himself up very quickly, and with a roar of rage launched his counter-attack, his khaki jacket bespattered by the remainder of his breakfast.

He was much too wrathful to be careful. An angry man is always a fool when it comes to direct action and so he presented no difficulties, for I have been fond of boxing ever since my days aboard H.M.S. *Conway*. He lashed out with a haymaker and, when that missed, came in close with a wild uppercut, which I also evaded. Then, I am glad to say, he did the unpardonable thing: he launched a terrific, meant-to-maim, kick at my groin with his heavy ammunition boot.

I caught his heel smartly, pushed his foot higher than my shoulder and threw him on to his back, while a couple of hundred men looked on. He scrambled up, red murder in his eyes, and as he did so I caught him with a left uppercut that travelled less than eight inches but had all the considerable weight of my rising body behind it. As he folded I sank my right fist almost up to the wrist into his beefy midriff. He went down with a whistling groan and lay still. Taffy grinned, Jock asked if any more porridge was wanted, and the issuing of breakfast went peacefully on. The bully lay grunting,

only half-conscious, for a couple of minutes and then rose, meaning to slink away. I grabbed him as he did so and told him that if he did not eat a mug of our porridge I would rub it into his red hair. He surrendered like the poltroon he was, and shambled away. All trouble was over so far as we cooks were concerned, but I kept my ladle always ready in the boiling water during food-issuing times.

After a couple of days or so, the billeting situation eased and nearly half the Force were given beds in wooden huts and a few rust-riddled Nissens. The rest were accommodated in crowded tents. The canteen received its stock and professional cooks and servants were brought in. But discontent and savage disillusionment continued very strong until we were told that we were not to remain at Sarafand as a battalion, but were to be posted in small parties to different parts of Palestine. My own platoon, in company with three others, was to be stationed at Nazareth to form the garrison of Galilee.

New life swept through our broken-down, decaying camp, although one man died of food poisoning and another of some undiagnosed disease. In small out-stations we should become a constabulary at last! Morale improved, cheerfulness returned and the Gendarmerie became a smart, efficient Force.

The following day a flurry of musketry broke out at the side of the dunes on which our camp was sited; an Indian sepoy on main guard at the military hospital, on the way to Ramleh, had run amok, shot a couple of British officers and started for the wide open spaces. He was brought down by rifle-fire, severely wounded, and taken into custody, where he was nursed back to health and, many months later, was certified as being physically fit to be hanged and duly executed on the scaffold in Jerusalem Prison.

The day after this shooting one of our dispatch-riders was ambushed by brigands in the cactus groves near Bir Salem, and badly wounded. Our chase after the attackers ended in the death of two of them after a smart action which did us all good. I went up to Jerusalem with Jock and Taffy on a day's leave, as we were very anxious to see the Holy City and to visit its historical sites. If I live to receive my Sovereign's telegram of congratulation on my hundredth birthday I shall not forget my first entry into the basilica of the Holy Sepulchre.

I know most of what there is to be said for and against the claims of the venerable buildings to cover the actual sites of our Redemption, but I do not, and never will, care one red cent whether it was on this actual spot that the Son of the Lord God died for us, or if He ever laid in the tomb they

showed us. Maybe it is true, quite probably it is not, but it does not matter to me. What *did* count in my eyes, and did so even more when for four years I was in command of Jersulaem Police Division and all these shrines were my personal responsibility, was the glorious fact that 2,000,000 men, women and children died during the two centuries of the earlier Crusade for this venerable fane.

I was looking at the goal of countless pilgrims, who came here in all centuries and from all parts of the earth: Becket's slayers, Norse kings, barons from the forests of the Baltic, the hills of the Carpathians, the valleys of France and Britain, soldiers all. This great and most holy place was their objective; to kneel beneath its domes they had endured untold hardships and mighty perils. For close on seventeen centuries Holy Sepulchre has drawn the hearts and souls of millions of men and women.

Taffy, a very quiet man of deep culture, put into words what we all felt. "It seems to me that we have done very well for ourselves. It's not everyone who has been permitted the honour of succeeding those Blackmantles and Templars who did our work so long ago."

TANCRED'S PRINCIPALITY

"F" PLATOON'S gear and equipment was loaded into half a dozen steel railway box-wagons. Taffy, Jock and an extremely tough gendarme (who looked as though he had been hewn in the rough from a block of rather coarse-grained teak, and who spoke with the accent of a gentleman from the Southern States of the Union), with myself, formed the escort for the baggage.

We made ourselves comfortable by erecting four folding iron beds in an empty wagon, which we detached from another train and quietly coupled on to our own. We settled down to play poker and enjoy ourselves as the train rolled north up the Plain of Sharon, but by the time we reached Haifa, fifty miles away, three days and four nights later, we had had enough of railroad travel and the American owned our money. Mosquitoes bit so hard and keen that "Kentucky" moaned we should all be down with malaria before we were many days older.

At Haifa we halted in the marshalling-yard near the level-crossing carrying the road-track to St. John of Acre. A high wall, ten feet away, cut off all view of the Nazareth road beyond, so that, in the darkness, we had no idea of our surroundings. A short reconnaissance towards the station produced a dozen bottles of German beer from a small sing-song Arab café blazing with the glare from half a dozen hissing paraffin-pressure arc-lamps, in which four blowsy Syrian girls were shaking tambourines and executing a *danse-de-ventre*. Their high, nasal caterwauling and the hostile stares of the audience playing backgammon and sucking water-pipes were not inviting. The night we divided into watches, one man was to keep guard over the trucks while the rest of us slept. At half past one Kentucky climbed into the truck and roused Taffy to take his turn as sentry. The uproar raised by the Welshman when he found his boots were missing awakened the rest of us to discover that all our footwear had been stolen from the truck while we snored on our beds. Some fairly trenchant remarks were slung at Kentucky, who indignantly gave his opinion that Limeys who could not look after their own shoes deserved to lose them.

The problem was that we had no other boots, for our kit was packed with the rest of the platoon's gear in the sealed and locked cars. In any case

it would be embarrassingly ridiculous for the much-publicized, and reputedly extremely tough, Gendarmerie to be the victims of a paltry sneak-thief. Taffy sat quiet for a while and then suggested that, as the American was the only one of us who was still shod, he should make a reconnaissance of the immediate neighbourhood.

Kentucky agreed, departed and returned within a few minutes to report that the town brothels lay only a few yards on the further side of the high wall beside our truck. No likelier nest of thieves could be imagined and we went into instant action. Taffy stayed behind to guard the baggage while Jock, Kentucky and I went off to investigate—the Scotsman and I in our socks, Kentucky in advance to watch for broken glass in the dirty sand and cinders of the marshalling-yard.

We found that the brothels were sagging lean-to's crouched against the walls, inside a large compound on the rough mountain-side of the lower slopes of Carmel. A few small paraffin-lamps glowed amber in some of the shanties, mosquitoes whined and a savage reek of cheap cosmetics, femininity, sewage and oily garlic reigned over all. Kentucky suggested that we should find the headquarters office and so exert maximum pressure from the top.

We knocked at the flimsy matchboard door of the only stone house in the compound and a large, very fat, one-eyed woman roused herself from her creaking, ornate, brass double bed. She growled and leered professionally when she saw our three uniformed figures and cut off her loud curses when she sensed the prospect of profit. In fairly good English she asked us if we wanted one of her girls, but she collapsed when Jock snarled at her to sit down and listen. The wretched woman probably thought she was facing three desperadoes who meant to rob and murder her, if no worse. With our Smith and Wesson .45 revolvers dangling in our absurd cowboy holsters from our hips, and with the Stetson hats on our heads, the old harridan seemed to think us most terrifying figures.

She asked, tremblingly, if we belonged to the new Police which she had heard had been sent to Palestine because of the murders we had committed in some land from which the English had been driven because of our brutalities. When Kentucky assured her that we were and that we were also eager to carry out further, and even more awful, tyrannies if she did not get us our boots, her loose mass quivered like a jelly in a high wind. I pointed out that, as we were a vastly superior kind of police, the local Force was not in the least likely to help her should she have any thought of appealing to them.

That appeared to her as logical, for she remembered the Turkish

Gendarmerie, and she tremulously assured us that everything possible would be done. After a deal of shouting of curses and a violent assault on one of her younger priestesses of Aphrodite, our three pairs of ammunition boots were duly returned. It seemed that the thief had taken them straight to the bedside of his *inamorata* and proffered them to her in fee. We sweetened the deal by giving the lady five piastres, whereupon she produced a bottle of arak and said how delighted her girls would be to entertain us should we deign to honour them. We refused as courteously as we could and got out of that place of hot and concentrated smells, triumphant *and* shod.

We spent the whole of the next day in the marshalling-yards, wearily waiting for our baggage to be transhipped from the standard line to the metre gauge of the Hedjaz railway. We found Haifa a spacious place, especially the German Colony, where the British officials lived in boarding-houses kept by German families, for most of the British wives had not yet come out to join their men. One of the members took us to the Railway Club, the rendezvous in Haifa of all Britons employed by the Palestine Government, but we were quickly thrown out by an aggrieved committee man, a European locomotive driver, who enlisted the help of the secretary. We were too socially insignificant to be allowed to mingle with our betters; we left without comment and wide grins and the fact that Taffy was a baronet was not even mentioned. But I was extremely interested; this was my first contact with Edwardian suburbanism convincing itself that it was an aristocracy, and modelling itself on what it had read in Charles Garvice and *Poppy's Paper*.

Next day we reached Afuleh. There was nothing at that junction but the railway station and the remains of a German airfield, with the dusty wrecks of some of their Taube aircraft still lying where they had been destroyed, on the ground, by Allenby's cavalry after they burst through the Pass of Armageddon to reach Nazareth only a few minutes too late to capture the German Commander-in-Chief, Liman von Sanders, who got away in his pyjamas and nothing else.

It was a lovely morning of blue skies with just a few fleecy white clouds racing across the bright vault of heaven. North-easterly, Mount Tabor swelled like a maiden's breast from the grey-green levels of the plain, with the runs of its Crusading castle-abbey forming its graceful nipple; the present basilica of the Transfiguration was still unbuilt. The handsome bulk of Little Hermon rose above us, with Endor and Nain little knots of cube-shaped houses on its flank, while all along the northern horizon the grey cliffs of Galilee soared like a precipitous coast above Armageddon.

The grey, flat-faced peak of this cliff was Precipatium, the drop over which the Master's fellow-townsmen wished to throw Him after the uproar in His childhood's synagogue. Four miles or so of almost straight, narrow, white road ran from the station at Afuleh to the foot of Precipatium, up which it wound in long, serpentine, sharp-cornered zig-zags to the summit. There, on the opposite segment of the rim of this "saucer-in-the-hilltop", stands Nazareth.

Our responsibilities for the baggage were taken over by some of our own platoon, who had arrived a couple of days in advance of us, their advance-party. They were delighted to see us, for their changes of shirts and khaki drill were locked in the wagons. We rode in one of our Ford trucks, Model Ts, most excellent vehicles for our rough job, with canvas sides and no wind-screens, easy to jump from in an ambush.

We found trouble at our barracks. These were the Russian buildings, a vast hospice built by the Czars for the hordes of simple pilgrims who had visited the Holy Places during the Easters of the years before 1914. They were beautiful and commodious buildings but the snag was that all their cool, large-windowed, red-tiled, spacious rooms were already occupied by a few Christian clerks in the service of the Governor of Galilee, a British ex-officer.

These native officials, many of them very young men clad in natty blue serge, European-style, lounge-suits of the flashiest cut, had really excelled in spreading themselves throughout the building. Rooms which once had housed two dozen or more Russian pilgrims in comfort were occupied by one clerk and his table. The only accommodation for the Gendarmerie was in the attics, between the unceiled red tiles of the roof and the flat top of the buildings, which were built in a rectangle surrounding a large, tree-shaded courtyard. The only windows in the attics were small dormers at the end of each wing, so that the place was a hell of suffocation both by day and, worse, when the latent heat of the sun's baking was radiated at night. With little air, and close on 150 men asleep in them, conditions were frightful.

We fetched water for ourselves from the Well of the Blessed Virgin, then not rebuilt, 100 yards downhill from our gates, the only water supply that ran all the year round. There was soon a flourishing trade being plied by the Nazareth urchins, who carried a four-gallon petrol tin of water to the barracks for a piastre (Egyptian currency was then the coinage of Palestine). We were not supplied with lighting and had to buy small paraffin-lamps in the bazaar if we wanted to see in our sweltering sleeping-quarters;

the stench of paraffin adding nothing to the amenities. The mess-halls were tiny, collapsible, sectional, metal huts close to the town cemetery, all of them aged and tottering with neglect. Each platoon had to eat in three sittings as there was accommodation for only eighteen men at one time. The kitchens were rudimentary, the flies nearly as bad and as thick as those I saw, many years later, in Tobruk, or at Halafaya Pass, feasting on the dead the day after the great battle.

But, despite all the pinpricks, we were happy, for we were busy at responsible and worthwhile tasks. Galilee, as in Christ's day, was infested with brigands, mainly stragglers from the Ottoman Army, who raided in small bands, and by Arabs from over the eastern bank of Jordan, carrying out their age-old practices of reiving the fatter lands of the settled peasantry. There were, as well, grim old wolves'-heads who had been on the run for years before the Sultan's Empire was smashed. We saw a lot of action, mainly small tip-and-run affairs, in which we made the astonishing and pleasing discovery that our enemies were gentlemen and sportsmen who looked after wounded enemies if they had to be left lying by their retreating comrades.

My own baptism of fire in the Holy Land came one evening when we were returning from a patrol towards Tiberias, during which we enjoyed a swim in the cool waters of the Sea of Galilee. As we approached Cana of Galilee (Kefer Kenna is its modern name), in the gloaming of twilight, we rounded a sharp bend on its eastern side and almost crashed into a low wall of boulders skilfully placed as a road-block. There was a ragged volley of musketry from the slope above, followed by supporting fire from the strangely marked hill on the further side of the valley through which King Guy de Lusignan's *levee en masse* had marched in the early July of 1187, as they went from Sepphoris to utter disaster at the Horns of Hattin, a few miles towards Tiberias, the site of the Sermon on the Mount.

There were six of us gendarmes and a sergeant in the Ford truck and we all hit the ground within a split-second of stopping on sighting the obstruction. Service in the R.I.C. had made that reaction almost automatic. It was just dark enough to see the spurts of flame from the rifles across the valley 500 yards away, as well as those among the boulders between us and Cana of Galilee.

The brigands probably hoped to catch some civilian car coming up from Tiberias with rich men from Damascus making their way to Haifa to catch the train for Egypt. Their small party near the road-block was meant to rob the wayfarers very quickly and then to withdraw to their main body,

who would give covering fire if something untoward occurred such as the arrival of a police patrol. Naturally, they were anxious to disengage as quickly as possible, for they had no desire for warfare that could yield them no dividend. This was the chance we needed to show the people of Galilee that the propaganda disseminated by the Palestine Government regarding our prowess and bloodthirstiness was not an empty boast.

Seven rifles fired at us from among the boulders in our rear while there were from twenty-five to thirty in the hands of the main body across the valley. Our sergeant, who had won a fine D.S.O. in the Royal Marine Light Infantry, ordered me to take charge of two men and to attack the party lying in the rocks towards Cana, while he led the remaining three to assault the party on the further hillside. The sergeant asked us if we all understood and then said, tersely: "Stand by the car, driver. Get under it and make sure no one pinches it! Password's 'Old Riley's daughter'. Shoot right away if anyone doesn't answer at once. Right? Let's go!"

That was all. Bullets were humming past us or whining shrilly as they ricocheted off the nearby rocks. I was scared to the marrow but very anxious that the others should not suspect my fear. My two comrades ran a few paces to either flank, leaving me in the middle, and when they both grunted that they were ready we advanced. Keeping line, just as if we were walking-up partridges in a turnip field, we fired at the flashes among the boulders ahead.

Some bullets from across the valley whizzed over our shoulders but, after a few rounds, the brigands in front of us started to run; in five minutes the shooting on our side of the road died away. We fired about a dozen rounds apiece before the man on my left flank, who had been a subaltern in a crack cavalry regiment, called out that he had stumbled over a dead body. Behind us, on the far side of the valley, there was still some musketry. It died away within a couple of minutes and the sergeant's whistle shrilled through the gathering darkness, sounding the recall. There is a very short twilight in Palestine and night falls fast.

We picked up our dead foe; I slung his rifle over my shoulders and we made our way back. The Ford was almost invisible as we stepped on to the road but the driver rapped out his challenge and we replied very quickly; our men were fast on the trigger. We laid the dead Arab in the bottom of the truck, and as we straightened our backs the driver challenged again. The sergeant called back, "Old Riley's daughter—relax." They also had an Arab corpse with them.

It was a very grim ride back to Nazareth, but the report of that little

skirmish on the Tiberias road ran through the mountains and stopped all highway robberies in Galilee for several weeks. The fame of the Gendarmerie was spreading; law and order was coming back to the villages which had known little of either for many years.

The question of our billets in Nazareth reached sheer exasperation as the summer grew hotter and June came in with a late and blistering *khamseen* wind, straight off the Eastern Desert. The worst times in Palestine are the beginning and the end of summer, when a hot, burningly dry wind rushes in from the wastelands beyond Jordan. It sears like the blast from the opened door of an oven; bone-dry, savagely desiccating, persisting day and night for some weeks. Irritations grow into murderous rages; men and women become nervous and desperately fretful, for there seems to be no moisture to be found anywhere and a dusty, choking, yellow haze fills the arid air. The last of the lush glory of the spring wild flowers fades entirely; all the heavenly carpet of scarlet and blue anemones, hollyhocks, cyclamens and lupins, golden daisies and the other wild flowers of Terra Sancta wither and die, fading into a tinder-dry brown scrub. Half the murders and clan fights in the villages occur at *khamseen* times. *Khamseen*, by the way, is the Arabic for "fifty" and is meant to show its duration of fifty days.

The air in our sleeping-quarters became unspeakably foul. For the first time we began to understand the true state of affairs in the Civil Service of Palestine. The British officials were often dependent on their native clerks and minor officials. These latter were not in the least slow to take full advantage of their position and assumed a vast hauteur towards us, whom they openly despised as "poor white trash" of soldiery.

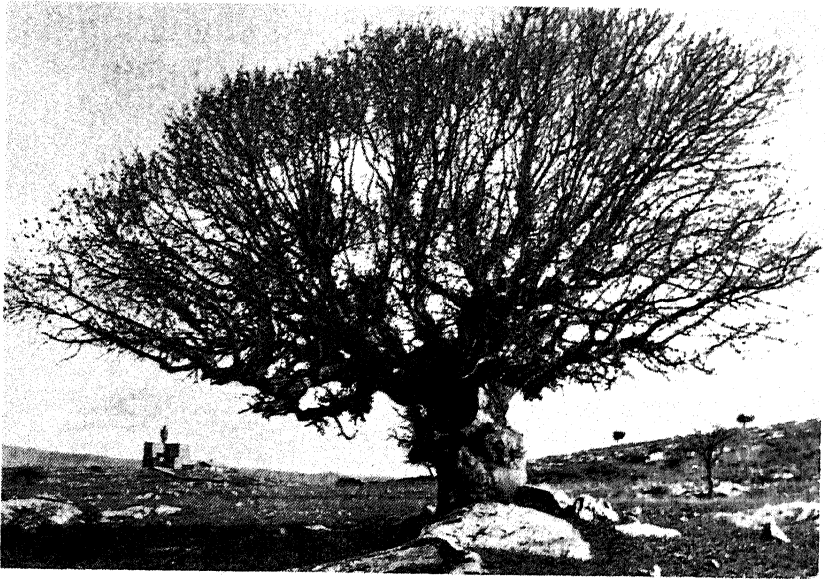
The sight of these arrogant young Nazarenes occupying rooms, each of which would have given reasonable quarters to half a platoon, became too galling to be borne. Conditions in the attics were insupportable and vastly unhealthy, for mosquitoes swarmed in them as well as scorpions. The final insult was given when the only lavatories in the place, a row of stone-built cubicles in the courtyard, were, although the native Christian clerks continued to use them, forbidden to the Gendarmerie, who were forced to accept a row of buckets behind a canvas screen in the open air. Worse, the only two shower-baths were put out of bounds to us and given to the clerks for use after they had been playing on the tennis-court in front of the Russian buildings, a court closed to any of us below the rank of sergeant. There were no baths for us; if we needed a wash-down, as every one of us did in that hell-wind of perspiration and dust, we could take one only by either paying an urchin to bring us sixpennyworth of water in petrol tins from the Virgin's Well, or by



Israeli girls in the fields of a colony on Armageddon



The amicable agreement between local Arab villagers and Jewish settlers over the founding of a settlement near Nazareth



An ancient tree near the Horns of Hattin in Upper Galilee, the Mount of Beatitudes and the battlefield on which the Crusader-king, Guy de Lusignan, was defeated by Saladin, 1187



The Waters of Merom, Lake Huleh, Upper Jordan

being one of a patrol on the roads to Tiberias or Haifa. Our commander, a Boer War veteran and a fine officer, told us that he had made every possible remonstrance to Headquarters in Sarafand but that we must await the Commandant's orders. That was the final red rag of provocation, for very few of us had the least confidence in our Headquarters. The next morning, after a particularly savage night of heat, when several men went down with sandfly and malarial fevers, things happened swiftly.

There was no ringleader; the four platoons seemed to act instinctively together. With one accord they picked up their beds and gear and moved into the big cool rooms of the storeys below. Some of the Nazarene clerks tried to protest and were at once offered their choice to leave by the door or the window. One of the pimpest continued to protest and was quickly defenestrated from the upper floor, along with his filing-cabinet, chair and desk.

After we had staged a show of passive resistance when we were ordered to evacuate, we were told that the civil authorities had kindly agreed to give up some of their office space and would occupy only one wing in future. The men who had taken up residence in that wing promptly moved their gear and beds to the rooms assigned to their platoons and all was peace. A subscription list was placed on the notice-board for the clerk who had left through his window—and was oversubscribed in less than half an hour; £150 was handed over by the Gendarmerie.

We had good mess-rooms, the canteen came indoors, there was plenty of work, conditions were endurable and we began to be happier. I was earnestly studying Arabic and found a family of Christian carpenters who spoke Spanish, as some of its members had spent years in Venezuela, so that I was soon on the road towards learning the rudiments of one of the loveliest and most ancient tongues in the world.

Their small house was above the Church of the Annunciation, close to the market-square. They were simple, honest, dignified folk of three generations. I heard tales of tyranny under Ottoman officials, of daughters snatched away in the bad days of the old man's grandfather. He spoke about the landing of the British at Acre in 1841, of which he had heard direct from his father, who had been a boy in that city when the Allied Squadron under Admiral Stopford bombarded it. He could recall his grandfather speaking of Napoleon's Battle of Mount Tabor, which was fought just beneath Nazareth; also of how the British Navy and Marines helped the "Butcher", Jezzar Pasha, to hold Acre against the Frenchman.

He had a yarn, of whose accuracy I cannot vouch, which related how

Napoleon, while sleeping in the Franciscan monastery at Nazareth, was continually disturbed by the *Muezzin's* strident call to prayer from the nearby minaret. The future Emperor was said to have snatched a musket from the sentry outside his bedroom door with which he shot the Muslim prayer-caller as he walked around the gallery of the minaret. To my aged friend that was the very cream of a joke, for to him the Muslim was, always and for ever, the enemy.

Nazareth was then very much as it had been for centuries, a quiet, law-abiding town, inhabited for the most part by Christians, most of whom belonged to the Greek Orthodox Church, with a fairly large number of Roman Catholics, many of the latter drawing some form of dole from the French and Italian missions. A small number of Muslim lived around their mosque but there were no Jews. Not that the Nazarenes were in the least anti-Jewish, and the few Jewish farms and colonies in the neighbourhood had friendly relationships with the little town. Nazareth was the shopping town for Lower Galilee, and its weekly market was well attended by the neighbouring farmers. Its carpenters, lace-needlewomen, blacksmiths, shoemakers and workers in leather, each trade working in its own separate bazaar, were very busy.

My hosts told me that Nazareth had grown very prosperous through the British conquest, especially its Roman Catholics and its few Protestants, all of them educated at Western mission schools and, consequently, in great demand to staff the lower grades of the new Civil Service. Two of my friend's grandsons were receiving excellent salaries in Government offices in Jerusalem because they spoke and wrote English; a son, who was employed in the Russian buildings, had been among those dispossessed by the Gendarmerie.

It was from these people, especially from one of the Jerusalem grandsons, that I began to learn the true state of affairs in the Government of Palestine. What he told me seemed so utterly fantastic that I could not believe it until, several months later, I confirmed it from my own experience and knew it was only too fatally true. With the exception of a few British officials like Ronald Storrs, Wyndham Deedes, Bramley, Symes, Sulman, the Kirkbrides, a couple of police officers like Alan Saunders, Bill Wainwright and a small handful of their kind, there was scarcely a first-rate man in the permanent ranks of the Civil Service of the Palestine Government.

The bulk of them had been recruited direct from the British Army of Occupation when, in 1920, Military Administration became Civil Government overnight. By that date most of the men who had come into the

Holy Land with Lord Allenby were demobilized; only those were left who either had no wish to return home or had nothing to which to go back.

Even this sorry state of affairs might not have been so serious if it could have been kept as a secret of the Conquering Caste. But that was impossible, for they vitally needed assistants who spoke the language of the subject races. That was where the local Christians, who could write and read Western letters, were quick to seize their chance.

The bulk of the people of Palestine were Muslim who, for centuries, had despised their Christian compatriots as sub-men. It was not easy for former masters to be dictated to by people whom they regarded as scarcely the equals of domestic animals. It was also natural for these Christian clerks, once they were in a position of unexpected authority, to seek to redress all the humiliations and sneers to which their folks had been subjected for centuries. *Faşad* (a word untranslatable into English) is the normal way of life in the Levant, almost a sport. *Faşad* can be described as "intrigue", but it is far more than that. It outpaces Machiavelli in cold cynicism and it regards success as full justification for any means employed to achieve it. Nothing is barred, from proffering perjured evidence in capital charges or the prearranging of criminal evidence against some person whom it is planned to rob or kill, to the worst of women-selling, with every possible gradation of lie, theft and slandering that lies between.

The pity is that so few Westerners who have held authority in these lands of the Near and Middle East either did not recognize *Faşad* or denied its existence. The first lesson that any Westerner dealing with the people of the Levant must learn is that *Faşad* flourishes and is a normal facet of all human relationships. Not that all Levantines are dabblers in the art. There are a great many simple, honest, even holy men and women among the Muslim and Christians, Jews, Druze, Mettwallis and Dervishes of Palestine, Syria, the Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt. But they are usually poor, uninfluential folk, living their obscure lives far from the storm centres and are themselves too often the victims of the intrigues of their more powerful brethren.

But all this was only slowly borne in on me. We men of the first-year Palestine Gendarmerie could not grasp such matters. Most of us were too disgruntled by our own treatment to care, and those who stayed on after the first period of engagement was over only learned the facts of Palestinian life very gradually.

Our first public proof that things in Palestine were not rosy came in

July when the Nazareth party was drafted down to Haifa, twenty-odd miles away. We marched, in battle order, into the German Colony to stand by while the Mandate was read from the steps of the Governorate which, in those days, was the seaward house on the eastern side of Carmel Avenue, a few yards above the German Pier, the Kaiser's landing-place on his fantastic visit of thirty years earlier.

Even after all I had heard from my friends in Nazareth I was astonished by the bitter hostility of the crowd which had gathered near the Governorate. There was a deal of shouting of slogans by rabble-rousers, mainly young Muslim of the better class. Had our Arabic been better we might have sympathized with them; though I doubt it, for most of us were so infected by the sense of our own superiority over "lesser breeds" that we scarcely regarded these people as human. Some of their more astute leaders had begun to realize that the promises made by Britain to King Hussein of the Hedjaz, about Palestine becoming an integral part of an Arab realm, were never likely to be implemented. The crowd listened to the solemn reading and heard of the Jewish National Home which was contained in the Balfour Declaration. Jews were even more deeply despised by the Muslim than his Christian race-mates, and the solemn confirmation that their country was to become a Jewish "Home" frightened and enraged them, rousing them to a maniacal frenzy.

Not that there was, in 1922, any sense of political nationality among the Palestinians. In those days the artificial States set up by their French and British masters meant less than nothing to them. Most Muslim of the illiterate masses were not conscious of being members of any nation, and if one was asked his nationality he always looked a trifle puzzled and replied, "Thanks be to God, I am Muslim." Such nationalities as Iraqi, Lebanese, Syrians, Jordanians or Palestinians meant absolutely nothing to them. Were they not all good Muslim? Was not that enough?

The crowd became angrier as their leaders harangued them and stones began to fly. One dagger glittered as it described an arc through the air and stuck quivering into the notice-board hung beside the Governorate's main door. Under the Ottoman Penal Code (which, confused by a spate of Official Ordinances, grew into an entirely incomprehensible torrent before, in a putrescent mass they were all swept away in 1948, was the law of the land) a bugle had to be sounded to give rioting mobs a warning to disperse before force was employed. I heard the strident shout of our own bugles, blown at the order of the District Governor (these officers were not yet "Commissioners") of Phoenicia. But it had no effect on the huge mob, who,

shouting violent slogans, some of them the age-old battle shouts of Islam, continued to surge forward.

The crowd had little idea of what it meant to do; it came on like a hydra-headed beast, content with the feeling that it was moving towards the foreigners whom their leaders had described as being anxious to deprive them of their homes and religion in the interests of the dogs of Jews, the "Forgotten of God". Things began to look ugly and we grew anxious, for most of us had had experience of hostile mobs in Ireland and knew how easily a small party of police and soldiers can be overrun if matters are mismanaged or decisions left too late.

Daggers were flashing in the sun, bottles and stones were flying, the brown-faced, shrieking mob, outnumbering our small party by possibly fifty to one, was surging at us and only a few yards away. Their bearded and moustached faces were writhing in the excited hatred of mounting fanaticism, eyes a-glitter, mouths wide open as they yelled insults and onset-shouts, hands waving, long robes swirling, dust rising and the sun burning down. High drama with the chance, if our commander faltered too long, of our being hustled to death like the Swiss Guards of Louis XVI.

There was no need for us to worry; the major in command was a veteran, an old Regular, who had fought at Omdurman, Spion Kop and Colenso as well as in the Flanders of 1914-18.

"Back the flanks!" he called, his voice soaring over the mob noises. "Form rally and square!"

This is a drill movement long abandoned in the British Army, but it is a most useful one for police or colonial soldiers engaged with an angry mob. We had learned the way of it in the Royal Irish Constabulary and carried it out smartly and swiftly, so that the knot of British civil officials who had been engaged in reading the proclamation and who, for the most part, were wearing the new Civil uniform, were safely and quickly tucked inside our bristling ranks.

"The square will advance," the major ordered. "In slow time—charge!"

For fear that to "charge in slow time" may sound a contradiction in terms, it should be understood that no finer manœuvre exists for dispersing a crowd without too much violence, or for protecting magistrates and prisoners walking in the centre of the square. With bayonets levelled and carefully dressed, the ranks keeping exact dressing, the square advanced with one corner leading, so that it assumed a diamond shape, forcing its wedge into the crowd. Probably because of my burly size I was the leading man of the whole square, having been Number One of the front rank when

we fell into formation. Behind us was our rear rank, their bayoneted rifles carried at the "high port", ready to open fire should the order to do so be given.

A line of stern-faced men in steel helmets and battle order, resolutely advancing behind a steady row of levelled bayonets, is extremely intimidating to any mob, no matter how fierce it may be. When that advance is carried out in perfect line, and slowly, there is an appearance of inevitable doom in its very steadiness. As our line of bayonets still came stolidly, inexorably on, but at a pace which gave time for the rioters to escape, they panicked and commenced to lash at their comrades behind so as to escape impalement on that terrifying line of steel glinting so evilly in the bright sunshine.

A few stones were cast, but the throwers were soon far too much concerned at the menace of the hedge of steel rolling towards them that, in almost less time than it takes to tell, they were in full flight. As soon as there was sufficient room between them and us our major consolidated the position. One platoon stood fast in order to protect the civil officials while the remaining three, keeping perfect formation, strode smartly forward, their bayonets still down at "the charge", and turned the retreat of the demonstrators into a complete rout. The square was soon empty and comparative silence reigned.

Our major stepped up to the District Governor, pulled out his notebook, scribbled in it, and then asked that officer to sign a certificate that no shots were fired, that none of the demonstrators had been injured by the bayonets of the Gendarmerie, and that the action in dispersing the crowd had been executed on the Governor's own orders.

A very wise man was our major, as I was to appreciate when I stood in his shoes in later years. He taught me a lesson I never forgot, for he left no chance for the Civil authorities to evade responsibility when the inevitable Court of Inquiry into the incident should sit. What I learned that day saved me, years later, when I was ordered to remove a screen from the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem and was forced to disperse a crowd of worshippers, but I will come to that incident in its proper season.

One Sunday morning, a few days later, I tried to rise from my bed in the Russian Buildings at Nazareth and found to my utter surprise that I had no command over my limbs. I felt perfectly well but completely ridiculous, as I was unable to move my arms or legs. Jock and Taffy, who lived in the same room, refused to believe it, especially as I was required for duty that Sabbath morning. Thinking I was trying to "dodge the column" they uptilted my bed and spilled me on to the floor. They soon grew alarmed, however, when

I continued to lay just as I had fallen. Only my head was under my command; I could turn that and I had, also, full control of my tongue to express the terms which I had learned at sea.

The small hospital of the Edinburgh Medical Mission Society, then in the bazaars of Nazareth, was closed for the summer, so that I had to go to the French hospital of the Sisters of Charity on the south-western outskirts of the town. Unfortunately, the French nuns had such a terrible opinion of the godlessness of the Gendarmerie that they seldom entered our ward, leaving that task to a pimply-faced, pock-marked, one-eyed Nazarene male orderly, who cheerfully pocketed any bribes he was given to bring in alcohol or food. He even offered us the services of a couple of Haifa prostitutes after dark, if any one of us felt strong enough to avail himself of their talents.

I lay three weeks in my bed in the ward and although I perspired profusely all the time, no one ever made it. I became accustomed to being able to move only my head, but some of my comrades were decent enough to feed me and to pass bed-pans, but I got no nursing from the Christian orderly, although I made a complaint to one Irish nun who came to see us. Unfortunately, she did not belong to the Nazareth house but was merely passing through, so we did not see her sweet face again—*she* would have made sure that we were not left to the mercy of the orderly.

The French-Syrian doctor could not tell me what was the matter with me, and his only treatment was that I must leave whisky alone. As beer was my hobby and I detested spirits, I could not see that this had anything to do with it. An orderly officer visited us occasionally, but most of the other gendarmes in the ward were enjoying themselves, having recovered long before from whatever malady had brought them into the place. They were anxious to stay where they were for as long as they could, without the need to do any work. They left the ward each night, by way of the big fanlight over the locked door, to visit the several small drinking-dens which had established themselves near the Russian Buildings on what was then the main road. They threatened anyone who betrayed the real state of affairs to the orderly officer with the father and mother of all beatings.

Fortunately, I was moved down to the Government hospital in Haifa, then a small building on the lower slopes of Carmel, where I at least had some attention. My bed was made and I had not to strain the red and wriggling mosquito larvae through my teeth whenever I needed a drink of water.

I do not remember being very scared at this paralysis—I had never heard of polio in those days—and I began to get better by slow degrees. The power crept back to one arm and then the other, all painlessly, and then my legs

started to function again. Whatever the disease I had contracted may have been, I recovered from it by the grace of the Lord God and my own strength, with precious little thanks to anyone else.

Then good fortune smiled. While I was in the Haifa hospital I heard that a Port Police and Coastguard was to be raised from among naval members of the Gendarmerie, and I hastened to advance my name. A few days after my return to Nazareth I was told to report to Mount Scopus in Jerusalem to interview the Gendarmerie captain, David Wainwright, an ex-lieutenant, Royal Navy, who was to command the new Coastguard. With some others who had held commissions at sea I was accepted and was told to go to Haifa to help to form a Preventative Force and Port Police from the ranks of the native constabulary.

My heart sang. From being a nonentity, a mere number in a rifle platoon of Gendarmerie, I was to have a command and be able to decide things for myself. That was what I needed, the chance to employ initiative and to engage in operations for which I would carry the responsibility.

Life was good! I was very happy as I stepped into the Ford car that was to carry us north to Haifa.

Then, near Huwara, just north of the hairpins at Khan Lubban, half-way between the Mountains of Judea and the foot of Mount Gerizim, we were ambushed by a couple of hundred Arab brigands.

GUARDIANS OF THE COASTS

THERE were four of us in the Ford tourer: three ex-naval officers and an Irish driver who had once served in the mounted branch of the Royal Irish Constabulary before fighting four years of war as a sergeant in the South Irish Horse. The sheer weight of the rifle-fire astonished me; I had been in several small fights with the hillmen but this was more like a private war! There were close on 200 Arabs shooting at us from the cover of the three boulder-strewn mountain-sides and the deep clefts in outcropping grey strata.

We all fell into the ditch at the side of the road in a very few seconds, with bullets kicking up spurts of dust or whining away as they ricocheted off the rocks and the dusty surface of the road. The place was extremely well chosen for an ambush, as, in those days, the Huwara hairpins had not been straightened, as they were a few years later when the road was widened and tarmacadamed. We had been stopped on the north side of the Pass, where the highway ran steeply down to the wide valley that leads to Nablus, a town nestling between the Mountains of Ebal and Gerizim, near the site of ancient Shechem. The two parties of riflemen, one right ahead of us on a spur of the hillside, the second slightly to our left-rear, should have made it impossible for anything to live on that road. In addition, a long line of marksmen were scattered along our right flank in the hills through which rough bridle-tracks run down to the Jordan, a dozen miles away. By all military standards our position was hopeless.

The Irish driver spoke first, after we had fired a few shots engaging each ambushing party with one rifle.

"If we could only grab the Lewis gun out of the back of the car you fellows might keep the brutes' heads down long enough for me to drive the car away," he said grimly. "It's less than ten miles to Nablus, and if I could get clear to bring help from our detachment there, these chaps would fade like snow in hell."

It was the only feasible plan, but my flesh crawled at the terrific risk of rising from cover—especially because, being in charge, I knew that I should have to take it. I felt the acid bile rising into my throat and for a moment I was really afraid that I would lose control of my excretory organs in the

way I have seen men do in similar situations. But the chill passed, swamped by the still greater terror that my comrades might realize what a coward I was.

"You're right, Pat," I agreed. "Keep up the barrage, chaps, I'm going for the Lewis."

The other two ex-sailors told me not to be daft, which gave me my chance to pretend to be so angry that they never suspected the struggle I was having to keep my voice from quavering. It was easy enough, once I had taken the plunge, however. I suspect that public executions are much easier on the principal actor for very much the same reason.

The air seemed to be filled with bullets and the sun-stricken, grey-sided valley rocked with gun-fire. Several bullets tore into the car as I ran the few yards towards it—I can distinctly remember seeing two holes suddenly appear in the canvas of the hood. The door of the back seat was hanging open, a piece of oily, dirty rag dangling a few inches out of its pocket. Inside was the long, light-grey box of the Lewis gun with the ammunition-box, looking very like a small suit-case, on the floor beneath it.

The bullet storm redoubled, the whine of ricochets shrilled more keenly; one tore into the black covering of the rear seat and made the springs of the cushion twang. Normally, I should not have tried to lift the awkward-shaped, heavy box by myself, but I fairly tore it out of the car, let it drop on the road and then grabbed the ammunition. I do not remember very much after that, for I towed the gun-box by one of its rope handles as I slid for the shelter of the ditch. It was all over in a few seconds, and then one of my companions got the Lewis gun into action, with the second former naval lieutenant clearing the ammunition, which, fortunately, was already loaded in filled magazines.

They got the devilish thing running within a minute of my fetching it and sent a sleet of steel-jacketed lead whistling along each of the enemy positions. The Arabs, who had been screaming with rage, dancing frantically with wrath and standing up to fire at us, instantly dived into deep cover. The crackling of their musketry almost died away, drowned by the clatter of our Lewis gun.

The Irish driver ran to the car, kicked aside some of the rocks, fiddled with the hand-throttle for a moment, doubled round to the front, swung the starting-handle and cursed when it did not fire. Dashing back, he heaved at the car after releasing the hand-brake and, as it started to move down the steep incline, he leaped inside, crouching over the wheel and roaring like a baresark.

The Lewis chattered savagely, but the ambushers, realizing what was happening, ignored us and concentrated their fire on the car, while the Irishman, his engine starting as he lifted his foot and allowed the Model T to come into gear, was rolling ahead of a mantling cloud of dust. He rounded the sharp corner at the bottom of the hairpins on two wheels, for I saw the car list madly as she swept round it. Then he was away, running clear of the gauntlet with every second helping his chances.

Pat Golden, our driver, was the hero of that ambush. May the Lord God rest his gallant soul, for he died, a few years later, shortly after becoming a commissioned officer in the then newly formed Palestine Police, but, before he passed to Valhalla, Pat was famous for many other deeds of bravery.

Our situation improved swiftly as the Ford drew out of range; our attackers knew that it would not be long before the two platoons of Gendarmerie stationed in Nablus would be racing out to help us. They broke off the action in good order, leaving a covering-party on the right side of the road to pin us down while the other two sections headed for the Jordan fords.

We fired at the covering-party until the shooting died down and then charged the ridge, from which we continued to shoot at the brigands until they passed beyond the limit of range. Half an hour later a column of Ford trucks, filled with Gendarmerie, all eager to have a share in a scrap on so large a scale, came grinding up the twisting road. They leaped out and set off at once along the tracks of the retreating Arabs, fighting a twenty-four-hour skirmish with them and killing several before it was all over.

As our orders were to report in Haifa as soon as we could, we took no part in the chase of our attackers. I felt very sick and chilled after the excitement ebbed when I found that I had a bullet-hole through the wide leg of my shorts and another in the conical peak of my Stetson hat!

We learned later that the reason for the elaborate ambush in full daylight (which was quite contrary to the usual custom, for the brigands preferred striking at dusk) was that a local clerk in the Jerusalem Treasury had gossiped with his mistress, a Turkish artillery officer's widow, who lived beside the Damascus Gate. He told her about a large sum of money that was to be sent to the District Accountants in Nablus, Nazareth and Haifa in a Ford touring car under a small escort of British gendarmes. Unfortunately he had not bothered to tell her, a few days later, that these orders were countermanded and the specie was sent by railway train.

There had been a lot of trouble in Nablus the previous evening in which people died violently. Nablus was one of the most fanatically Muslim towns

in the whole country, worse even than Hebron. Its people, for the most part, are descendants of Samaritans who apostatized to Islam, although there was, until 1949, a small body of Samaritans in the town who still remained loyal to their ancient faith. Their Paschal sacrifice of lambs in front of the ruins of King Jeroboam's Temple on the crest of Mount Gerizim was the last trace of the ancient temple ritual of the Hebrew kingdom.

There are few Muslim in Palestine so treacherous, cruel and bigoted as the Nabulsis. There are many interesting survivals which prove their ancient descent; among these is the fact that no modern Nabulsi (i.e. no inhabitant of the Jebel Nablus, which is the Old Testament Mount Ephraim) can pronounce the Arabic letter "Sheen"; he always uses "Seen". He cannot help himself any more than could his ancestors, who, according to the Book of Judges, were killed because they failed to give "*Shibboleth*" its full value, and lisped "*Sibboleth*". We could always identify a Nablus man, or one from its neighbouring villages, by inviting him to use such words as "*Sharq*" (the East), or "*Shems*" (the Sun). If he said "*Sarq*" or "*Sems*", there was no doubt of the district from which he hailed.

The trouble had been caused by the taking of a census, which had met the identical reaction of David's day and the Maccabean period. Apart from the 1921 riots in Jaffa these Nablus census riots were the first serious sign of trouble and revolt against the British Mandate. Inspired by some religious leaders from the Haram (the Great Mosque of Jerusalem which stands on the site of Solomon's Temple), the Nabulsis had been told that the census was only the new Christian Government's first step towards emptying Palestine of all Muslim in order to make room for its Jewish protégés.

In the summer of 1922 the whole question of Zionism was practically unknown to the Palestinian peasant and small townsman, for the Jaffa and Jerusalem riots of the previous year had been a mere local squabble. There was an immense fund of goodwill towards Great Britain, and a general belief that life would be far better under our new dispensation than they had been when Palestine was a derelict district of a remote province in the disintegrating Ottoman Empire. Of nationalism, too, there was then little sign except among some of the scions of the wealthier Muslim families in Jerusalem, who were aggrieved because most of the better Civil Service appointments had already been snapped up by Christian officials. Young Muslim men of good family were beginning to emerge from the schools, especially the American University in Beirut, with a wide knowledge of English, which would have qualified them for office if they had been ready just after Lord Allenby's conquest. There were few vacancies, however, as

the general tendency of the Palestine Government was to retrench right down to the bone under the baleful influence of the "Bag and Baggage scuttle" policy of certain British national newspapers which was raging at that period.

The main difficulty of the Arab leaders in Jerusalem was the lack of any cause, other than that of religion, upon which they could rouse their countrymen. Without any conception of patriotism to the land in which they lived, for Palestine had not been a native sovereign state since the days of the Maccabean rulers, with no consciousness of any political nationality and lacking any sense of mutual race, or even of kinship of blood, the only unifying bond was that of the Faith of the Prophet. Even the concept of their being Arabs, which all the settled peasants of the hill villages would have resented as a deadly insult in 1922, had not then been enunciated.

But the shadow of Jewish infiltration was already filling the minds of Muslim leaders in Jerusalem who, justifiably, feared the future, despite the loud and, at the time, sincere denials of the British that it was not their intention to "*allow Palestine to become as Jewish as England is English*". Nablus was the first place to be roused, for the innate fanaticism of the townsmen, together with the fact that it is one of the main centres of population, made it the logical centre to start resistance. It held many of the young effendi class, eager to overthrow an alien administration which held no prospects for them. The malcontents moved fast among the more ignorant and poverty-stricken bigots of the town's slums lying behind the Great Bazaar and quickly roused them to a hysterical heat of resistance.

When the census-takers arrived they were met by abuse, and, when they persisted in their duties, cobble-stones began to fly. The age-old rallying call of Islam rang through the vaulted bazaars and the local police were driven out of the streets. The British Governor of Samaria called out the Gendarmerie, much as Pontius Pilate once loosed his legionaries on the Samaritans, and they waged a terrific fight in the night-filled rabbit-warren of lanes and side streets; against fanatics who honestly believed they were fighting for God and Faith. The Gendarmerie battled joyously with pick-shaft and rifle-butt, less than 100 men against close on 4000, dodging tiles dropped from flat roofs, hurtling daggers and every kind of missile, including a few pistol bullets, until they had cleared the maze of cobbled lanes in the *Sug* (the bazaar).

There were only a few men left behind in the Nablus barracks when we arrived, but they were full of the previous night's doings as we three, glad to be alive, sat in their canteen and listened to their yarns of the previous

night's fight. Pat Golden, our driver, was in bed, for he had taken a bullet through the fleshy part of his thigh, and if anyone remembers how a Ford Model T had to be driven with foot-operated gears, they may gather some idea of the Irishman's determination. With his leg streaming blood he undoubtedly saved our lives by his courage and endurance.

I found as I listened to the monotonous voices of the gendarmes that a strange thing was happening to me—I was actually beginning to feel pity for the wretched people whom it was our duty to hold down. That may sound strange, but in 1922 we regarded "the lesser breeds without the law" far differently than is the case today. Mentally, I suppose, we were still living in the great days of Empire; our attitude was that of Britons of the Diamond Jubilee era, to us all non-Europeans were "wogs", and Western non-Britons only slightly more worthy. When one of the Nablus detachment produced an old cigarette-tin containing the brains of a man whose skull he had splintered with his rifle-butt (the smashed weapon was also exhibited), I felt physically sick.

I was not in the least fastidious; at sea, and especially in South Russia, I had seen sights as terrible as any that happened in Attila's or Ghengis Khan's days, and yet the sight of that gloating, grog-blossomed face of the gendarme with his can half-full of human brains, proudly brandishing his smashed rifle-butt as proof of his prowess, altered something deep inside of me; people who owned skins other than pink Western ones became human beings.

It was from that day, too, that I really began to take a deep and abiding interest in the land of Palestine itself. Because its story was too long and vast to be assimilated at once I commenced to learn all I could of the two centuries of the Crusade. Money that, normally, I should have spent on gin, or German beer, went towards buying books on the Holy Land and in financing visits to the sites and neighbourhoods of its historical geography. I am afraid that I have gone to great lengths over this small Nablus episode, but to me it meant a complete mental and spiritual transformation. Over that cigarette-tin holding the grey animal matter which had once been the physical mechanism of an immortal soul, standing on a beer-soaked table in Nablus, a couple of hours after skidding so close to violent death myself, I lost my mad and arrogant ideas of being one of a "Master Race" of conquerors, and began to appreciate the fact of our shared humanity, of our common brotherhood under the Fatherhood of the Lord God.

We left Pat Golden in the Nablus hospital when we set out next morning and reached Haifa, where we reported to an officer of the Gendarmerie

detachment at an old, deserted field hospital on Ras-el-Krum, a barren beach beneath Carmel Point, on which the modern suburb of Bath Galim now stands. He would have nothing to do with us of the Coastguard, saying that, as we were seconded from the Gendarmerie, we had no claim on either him or the Force. I pointed out that we were still being paid by the Gendarmerie, had no lodging allowance and certainly could not afford to eat in a Haifa restaurant; also that, as it was already nearly five o'clock, it was almost impossible to look for lodgings, for which, in any case, we could not pay.

His reply was to order us to stand to attention and to tell us that if I said another word he would give us all free lodgings under arrest in his guard-room, and send us back to Jerusalem the next morning under armed escort. We clicked our heels, saluted and climbed back into our Ford car. Fortunately, our ex-Royal Marine captain, who had been working in Headquarters orderly-room, remembered that only part of the derelict camp-hospital was in the possession of the Gendarmerie, the rest was open to anyone who cared to enter it. Without saying a word we quietly moved into the side of the camp farthest from the Gendarmerie.

We were sailormen, or we had been, and it did not take us very long to strip the under-canvas from beneath flapping shreds of tarred roof-felt, to rouse out some timbers from the joists of a collapsing bathroom-hut, and to make bunks for ourselves by nailing wood and canvas on to the walls of a big timber hut which had "Sisters' Mess" written in mouldering paint on its sun-dried door.

We drove into Haifa, where we bought some native bread, a couple of tins of pilchards, a *rotl* (about four pounds) of tomatoes and a dozen bottles of dark *Hackerbrau* Munich beer from Pross', a beer-garden in the German Colony, and so were all set for the night.

Next morning, very early, a sergeant came across from the lines used by the Gendarmerie detachment and brusquely told us to clear out. He looked at our carpentry and said that we should probably have to pay for the damage we had done. As senior Acting-Inspector of the Port Police, although I was wearing the uniform of his own Force, I told him to go to the devil and added that we, as officers of the Coastguard, had set up our local headquarters in this part of the camp, over which the Gendarmerie had no control.

The sergeant blustered a bit. He turned almost purple and stamped away to bring back the officer. (I was riding in a bus near London, many years later, when this officer boarded it clad in a ticket-inspector's livery. One of

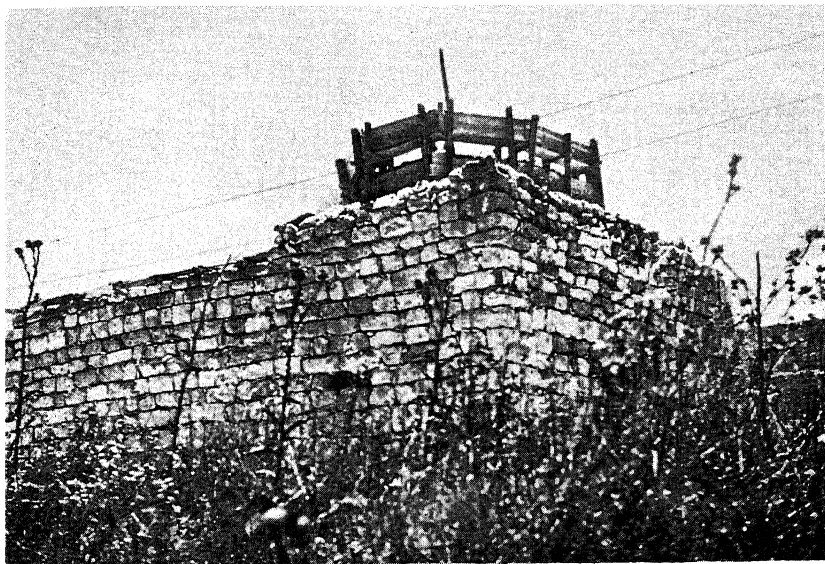
the few items standing to my credit in the Recording Angel's ledger is that I treated him as an old comrade.) I stood to attention and paid him every mark of respect to which his rank entitled him, but I remained quite firm in refusing to evacuate the new "Headquarters of the Northern Division, Palestine Coastguard and Port Police", a title which came to me in a flash of inspiration. I referred him to my Commanding Officer, Major David Wainwright, late Royal Navy, and then Chief Preventive Officer for the Palestine Government. Wainwright had won an excellent Albert Medal in minesweepers after the end of the First War, and had also been a prisoner of war after his destroyer was sunk at Jutland.

When the captain threatened me with close arrest I pointed out, as he himself had said when refusing us quarters on the previous night, that I was on secondment away from the Palestine Gendarmerie and, until I was re-attached to it, not amenable to its discipline. If he insisted on placing me under arrest, or in ordering me to return to Jerusalem, I should have to refuse to submit until I had the necessary orders from my own Commanding Officer.

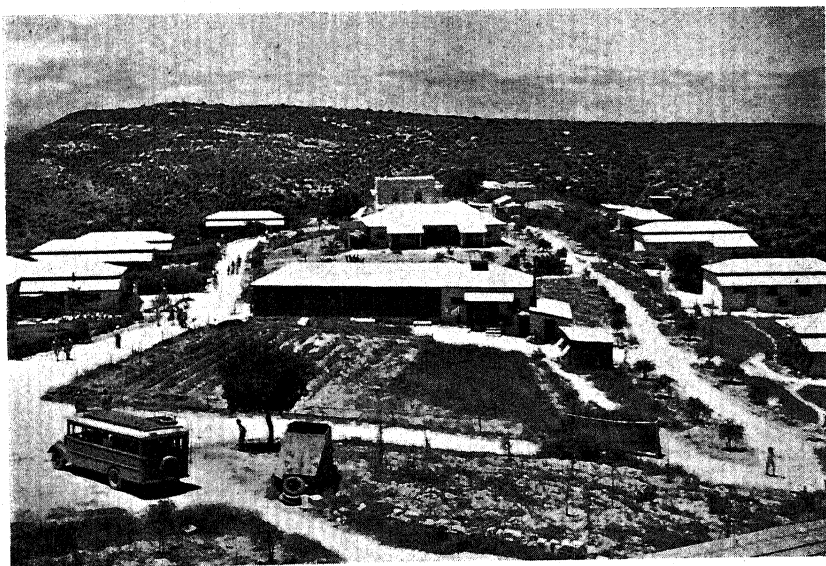
He did not call my bluff and stamped away without saying another word. But we were a long way from being settled in; food was our most immediate need and that we had to obtain without any money and, also so far as we could see, with no reason why anyone should allow us the least credit. Breakfast became an aching priority; we mustered fifteen piastres between the whole party when we turned out our pockets, which was enough if we were frugal. We drove our Ford tourer back into Haifa, in those days merely a small town clustered around the mosque and railway-yards and, by judicious marketing, bought sufficient olives, native bread and fried fish to provide one meal.

Feeling much better, we carried out our previous orders and reported at the port, which was not much more than a couple of corrugated-iron warehouses standing on the stumpy jetty, then the whole of the commercial port of Haifa. There was a short row of wooden buildings, still bearing the faded names of different Royal Naval officers who had been in charge of the port four years earlier. One small, portable, derelict, yellow-painted hut, which had belonged to the Ottoman harbour-master in the days before Allenby, stood in isolated dinginess, surrounded by a drift of stranded flotsam, on the beach beside the stones of the jetty's roots.

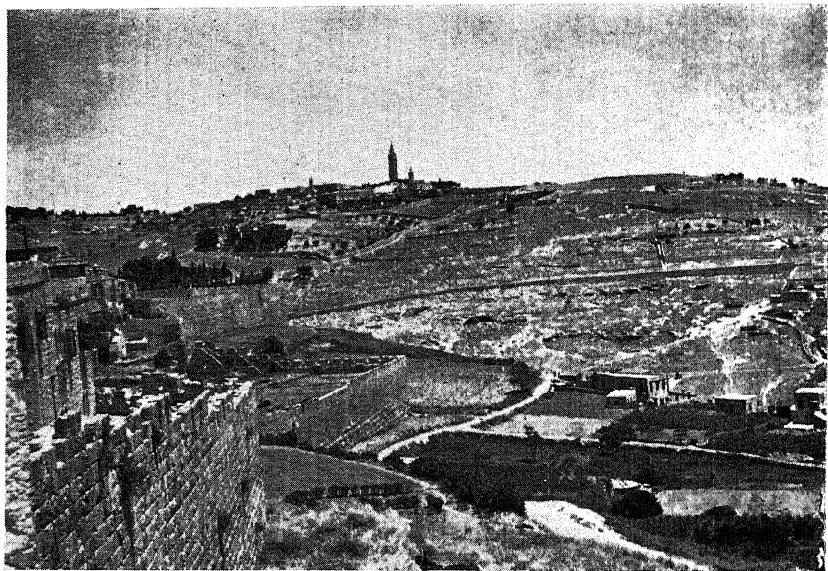
I reported to the British harbour-master, a white-moustached aged master mariner, who looked superciliously at the four of us, sniffed and said that he had never even heard of a Coastguard, and as for a Port Police, he



Ruins of Crusader fortalice becomes defence strong-point
in new colony in Galilee



A colony sited on hillside that was barren since Hebrew days



The Mount of Olives, looking across the Kedron Valley from the battlement-walk on Jerusalem's walls close to the Zion Gate. Tower on skyline is Russian church of the Ascension, site of which is marked by minaret to left



Jewish colonists working on barren hillside in Galilee

already had a dozen Palestinian constables who had served under the Turks, and who were all he needed. I told him that I had authority to take over an ex-Ottoman motor-launch, renamed *Progress*, as well as another named *Welcome*, and to arm and equip them for service with the Coastguard.

The harbour-master instantly detonated, told me that one launch was his, while the other was reserved for the exclusive use of the Director of Customs, and announced that he was double-damned if he was going to give them up to a swashbuckling gang of ex-Royal Naval nincompoops, who were so utterly and undesirably inefficient that even their own ramshackle Service had flung them out, so that the only employment they could get was to dress up like soldiers and behave like ruffians inflated by a conceit which made them as bloated as a poisoned puppy dog's head!

I grinned. I couldn't help it. So did the rest of us. This old master mariner was just the man for us, and after a while, he grinned as well and slowly returned to his normal pale-mauve complexion. He invited us into his office, sent for some cold beer and gave us a description of the set-up at Haifa. It was an eye-opener! Finally, he told us that we could have the old Turkish storehouse, although half of it was boarded off for the use of a British foreman on the Palestine Railway, who used it, about twice a year, whenever any coal ships were discharging in the Roads.

The hut was something tangible; we took it gratefully and moved over to have a look at our property. Full of dust but complete, the room available to us was about eight feet by twelve and had, at least, nine scorpions living in it, who looked extremely annoyed at our trespassing on the peace of their years. That gave us our office; the next objective was to find the Palestinian (I detest the word) in charge of the so-called Port Police. He was a four-striped sergeant-major who introduced himself as Redwan Zaroubi, and said that he was a Christian from the nearby village of Shefr Amer. Further inquiries showed that the two corporals were his brothers, Yussef and Gabriel, that two of the three lance-corporals were his nephews, sons of one corporal, and the third the nephew of the *bash-shawiss's* wife. *Bash-shawiss*, by the way, is the Turkish title for a sergeant-major. *Umbashi* is a corporal. *Wakil-umbashi*—lance-corporal.

We told him who we were and also what we were going to do, whereupon Redwan's handsome, Kaiser-moustached face looked extremely interested. I liked him at first sight and grew to trust and honour him the more during the months we served together. Redwan Zaroubi was an unusual person for a Palestinian in Government official employ; he was an entirely honest man of great shrewdness who really liked serving under

Western administration. At that moment, however, we had no time to discuss matters with him; we reported to the acting-chief of the Haifa Customs, a senior Syrian Christian official, and were met with disdain; "poor white trash" stood out all over the swarthy face of the stout man in the very neat Palm Beach suiting.

He was polite, frostily so, but he took no pains to disguise the fact that he considered us superlatively unimportant. He announced that he had no intention of allowing us to take over his motor-launch and suggested that, meanwhile, we did nothing until we heard from him what he considered to be the best employment for us. I asked him what arrangements he had made for our billeting and rations, pointing out that as we were seconded to his department it seemed that these were his responsibilities.

His reply was that officials in the Palestine Government's Civil Service were paid a nett salary from which they fed and boarded themselves. If there were any different arrangements to be made in our case he regretted that his Headquarters at Jerusalem had not told him about them. We left, destitute and apparently derelict, but at least we had an office without furniture and a billet with bunks which we had made for ourselves. Our next, and most pressing, need was food, but without any money, alone in a cold-hearted world that did not seem to need us, famine loomed large.

There was a new restaurant in the German Colony which had just been opened by two British ex-officers. Later on it was bought by the firm of Spinneys, named after an official in the "redundant" Railway Provisioning Department, who became one of the company's directors and general manager. We drove our car to the restaurant and I went inside. Both proprietors were present; one was a stout, burly fellow, the other a very small Yorkshireman, both of whom had married Syrians. The stout one seemed sympathetic when I told him our story, but the small one said, brusquely, that they were not in the trade to give free handouts to hungry coppers, and demanded who was going to pay for our three meals a day?

I told him that the only thing of which I was certain was that it would not be us. I suggested that he fed us for a week and sent the bills along to the Quartermaster at Gendarmerie Headquarters in Sarafand. If that officer refused to pay, the account could be forwarded to the Customs. If both repudiated their liability I suggested the proprietors should sue all four of us in the Civil Court; on receipt of the summonses I would send the documents to the Gendarmerie Commandant and request instructions. The chances were overwhelming that, to avoid publicity, the whole matter would be

hushed up. If it was not, then as we had no money and could not pay, we should have to be committed to jail as Civil prisoners, which, in the European Ward, would be no worse than being in the Gendarmerie. So far as the proprietors were concerned, even if no one paid them, they would receive sufficient publicity to recompense them. I suggested they should avail themselves of such fine free advertising for their new restaurant.

The two ex-officers were sportsmen and agreed to my proposition. We trooped in and had an excellent meal. As senior, however, I took pains to report the whole matter to David Wainwright, our Commanding Officer. After our midday meal another emergency overtook us; we ran out of petrol while we were in the main square, and with no money and without authority to draw motor fuel from any public source, we were immobilized.

This seemed to be the end until the Marine had another brainwave. He suggested that we should go to the port, take over the two launches against all opposition, as we had written orders to do, and thus obtain sufficient petrol to restock the Ford tourer. It was brilliant but it needed finesse if we were to carry it through successfully.

I walked into the Customs area, from which the public were only nominally excluded by a collapsing barbed-wire fence, accompanied by one of my comrades—accomplice may be the better word. We shouted for the *bash-shawiss* and Redwan Zaroubi promptly came running, his honest face very cheerful. I ordered him to parade all the available Port Police and, when the hesitant Arab constables were fallen in, we turned them to the right in fours and marched them away until we reached the edge of the shade beside Customs Headquarters. By this time there was quite a crowd of fishermen, stevedores and sailormen from the small schooners alongside the wharf looking on, together with the crews of the three small tugs under their stout, swarthy-faced old *Reis*. We turned the Port Police about and marched them around for a few minutes, making a great panache of our mastery of squad drill.

By this time the harbour-master and the Customs chief were at their windows. The time had come! My companion took command of half of the Port Police and I the remainder. Without batting an eyelid we marched them on to the two launches lying alongside the steps with no one aboard. I gave orders to cast off the moorings and we stood away at once from the wharf. We rounded its end and started to run westerly for the small German pier at the bottom of Carmel Avenue, disregarding the shouts of the angry harbour-master and Customs superintendent.

At the German pier I landed Redwan Zaroubi with a four-gallon tin of

petrol which I ordered him to take (borne by a basket-boy for whom he was to pay, as neither my partner nor I could muster a red cent between us) to the square to hand it over to the Marine, who was standing guard over our temporarily immobilized car. As soon as he was safely on the pier we cast off again, rounded the cape on which then stood the Carmelite convent (since removed to the crest of the mountain and replaced by the miniature skyscraper of what was, in the last years of the Thirty Years' Crusade, the Government hospital) and finally anchored, with great *éclat*, just off the rocks on which the derelict field-hospital's huts were crumbling away.

I ordered one Port policeman to remain aboard each launch and then, landing the rest in the dinghy towing astern of *Welcome*, we all went to our hut to await developments, first, however, returning the rest of our khaki-clad warriors to the port to carry on with their normal routine.

Developments came swiftly. The British sergeant reappeared and told us that it was his captain's orders that we should instantly return the two launches to the port. I pointed out that we were the Coastguard and not under any necessity to obey orders from outside sources. I sent a message from Officer Commanding Northern Divisional Coastguard to the Officer Commanding Gendarmerie detachment at Haifa, informing him that I had set up my headquarters in the Eastern section of Ras-el-Krum camp and that I proposed mooring my marine craft offshore until either the weather deteriorated or other arrangements could be made. I then told the sergeant to inform his C.O. that the officer in command of the Coastguard would appreciate his co-operation in safeguarding this valuable Government property, and I would be obliged if he would instruct a sentry to patrol the foreshore! Meanwhile, if he cared to come over and meet my officers socially, I should be glad to entertain him.

To cut the Gordian knot, after finding that there was plenty of fuel aboard the launches, I sent them both off on extended patrol, telling them to make for Jaffa to refuel. That settled any chances of the harbour-master and Customs superintendent getting them back before our own C.O.'s arrival.

To cut a long story as short as possible, David Wainwright smoothed everything out in his own inimitable fashion. We took over one launch as our own; we were given a flat in the German Colony, the pay of inspectors in the Civil Police and the rank of acting-inspectors. An ex-submariner, who was a sergeant in the Gendarmerie, was sent to us as our local commanding officer ashore, and I was given the launch as my own province. Honour was satisfied and some of us, at least, were happy.

At first it seemed to be an exciting game. It was, but it was played with sharp weapons and edged tools. When people who had been making fortunes out of the state of affairs prior to our arrival discovered that we could not be bribed, death always lay on the table as the forfeit for any carelessness or over-confidence on our part.

CHAPTER IV

CONTRABAND

DAVID WAINWRIGHT pointed out to us that there was always a chance that the Palestine Government might suddenly order the discontinuance of British Gendarmerie aid to the local Coastguard. That would have been a disaster, for we had not the least desire to return to drilling on the barrack square while we had a chance of going to sea. Wainwright was already wise in local matters; he knew that some of the native Customs officials, who were probably afraid that we might interfere with their perquisites, might persuade their British seniors that we were "redundant" and have us withdrawn.

The Customs senior people in Haifa, too, angry at being deprived of their launches, might add their weight, and consequently we played our hands with the cards very close to our breasts.

For the first fortnight we quietly fitted out the venerable *Progress* for sea. We repaired her ancient and worm-eaten timbers while "Hooky", who had been a Warrant-engineer in the Royal Navy, tinkered with her decrepit engines. We swallowed all insults with smiling faces, pretending to be too stupid to understand that we were being insulted, until we began to feel the ground becoming a little more solid under our feet. We even accepted the humiliation of the physical examination of the 200 registered prostitutes being diverted to our office, and cleared out meekly for long periods while the Port Medical Officer was using our dusty, horse-hair-covered sofa for his clients.

Prostitution was still legal in Palestine in those days and there was a large licensed brothel area in Haifa. Every woman in it was equipped with a small, black-covered book, about the size of a modern driving licence, which bore the Royal Arms of Britain in gilt, with the words

GOVERNMENT OF PALESTINE

LICENCE

PUBLIC WOMEN

I doubt if the Arms of our Royal House have ever been displayed on a stranger document!

I was appointed to command *Progress* with an ex-Royal Naval Reserve lieutenant, who had been two terms senior to me in H.M.S. *Conway* as Second Hand, and "Hooky" as our Engineer. In addition one lance-corporal and four constables of the Port Police were allotted to us as our crew, and stout-hearted men they quickly proved themselves. Yussef Umbashi, whom we rated coxswain, had served under the Turks, and knew his business thoroughly. He was loyal, too, and as the four constables were his distant cousins of a junior branch they faithfully followed his lead.

My Arabic was improving by working shoulder to shoulder with the Port policemen and mixing with the workers on the quay. To keep myself out of Pross's beer-cellar and off the verandah of the restaurant where we fed, I paid a small sum to a minor Muslim functionary of the small mosque in the bazaar to instil the groundings of Arabic syntax and grammar into my skull. Within a couple of months I understood the main drift of the long-shoremen's conversations and quite a lot of what the minor Customs officials, resplendent in blue and gold, discussed. I also became an adept in the curse, anatomical and genealogical, which is the Arab speciality.

Slowly, too, I began to grasp the meaning of *Fasḡad*. The danger of it is that so many Westerners refuse to face the brutal fact that Levantine moral codes are far different from what we proclaim to be ours.

I came up against my first experience of *Fasḡad* during those early weeks in Haifa port. As we worked on our launch some of the more junior Customs officers lounged around and slandered both their comrades and most of their seniors, while always praising their own personal individual honesty and singleness of purpose. As the days passed and it seemed likely that we would not be disbanded by the intrigues of their seniors, the juniors evidently considered it might be as well to ingratiate themselves with these British policemen, who were stupid enough to remain honest and loyal towards their paymasters. We tactfully returned cases of Munich beer and bottles of whisky, not so much out of any sense of virtue but because we were learning some of the more elementary traps for the type of person that our cynical Syrian *confrères* imagined us to be. If we had taken any of the gifts it would not have been long before the British seniors learned from their native juniors that the new British Coastguard inspectors were every whit as venal as their Palestinian comrades. We refused admittance to coy, steely-eyed, veiled ladies who smiled at us out of *kohl*-shaded eyes when they called after dark at our flat. We recognized most of them as clients who used our office to interview the Port doctor.

David Wainwright insisted that we should do something spectacular to

warrant our continued existence, and we decided to stamp out the murder industry practised by the boatmen, a nasty business of long standing. In those days the main passenger traffic along the coast was carried by ships of the Lloyd Triestino, Sitmar and Khedivial Mail Lines, because the roads were so difficult, and railways non-existent, on the stretches between Haifa and Beirut and all points north. There was then no harbour installation at Haifa, so the mail-packets had to ride to an anchor far out in the Roads to embark their coastwise passengers who came out to them in pulling-boats from the shore.

We heard many rumours about travellers with money, or who had ostentatiously displayed jewellery, disappearing between their homes and their destinations. We had a shrewd suspicion that many of the missing people had vanished between the stone steps of our jetty and the bottom gratings of the gangways of the mail-packets anchored in Haifa Roads. It was impossible to prove this in any court of law for many reasons, one of which was that most passages were booked at the head of those accommodation ladders; the ship's pursers consequently having no idea of how many passengers might be boarding them for the short runs between neighbouring ports. Such large numbers travelled in this way that no complete record of their names was kept.

We checked some of the more recent passenger-lists for names of missing people and found none of those whom we were seeking, although our exit list at passport control showed that they had embarked at Haifa. In some cases there was not even this much proof, for our passport control was extremely shadowy and, as no one had then thought of "Palestinian citizenship", entailing the issue of quasi-British passports, there was little real record of who came and went. But the more we studied the question and listened to the loose, careless talk of some of the longshoremen, along with the broad hints dropped by people indulging in *Fasqad*, the more certain we became that a flourishing trade in piracy, murder and robbery was going on between ship and shore in Haifa Roads.

Our greatest asset was that the Palestinians involved despised our capabilities so thoroughly that they did not even consider us intelligent. The second was that the racket was so well established and successful that its operators had grown confidently careless. We had to avoid alarming them; that was not difficult in view of their egregious conceit, but they were so efficiently organized that we needed the greatest luck ever to obtain a conviction, for the testimony of false witnesses would be so strong, consistent and well constructed that no district court judge could convict on any

evidence we might bring. Consequently, our only course, if we were to save the lives of travellers passing through our area, was to take direct action against the murderers; to fight them with their own weapons. As a first step, and to allay suspicion, we took to making night patrols far out to sea and so further strengthened the contempt of our Palestinian neighbours. They smiled sardonically at the sight of the British Coastguard so blindly accepting false information and dashing off beyond the horizon to ambush mythical smuggling schooners which never came by any such route. We even pretended ignorance when we knew only too well that a coasting sailing-ship from Tyre was hovering off-shore, waiting to land a cargo of ten tons of Lattakia tobacco on the beach just north of the outfall of the River Kishon, "that ancient river" which is almost on the outskirts of the town of Haifa. Lives were of more value than contraband, and being opposed by such long odds we had to adopt a policy of "first things first".

Our scheme worked well, for, after a few weeks, the criminals were so confirmed in their sovereign contempt for our intelligence that they took little care to conceal their doings.

One night, when three mail-packets, a Khedivial boat, wearing the Red Ensign, bound north to Beirut, Alexandretta and the Dardanelles, a "Sitmar" ship and a Lloyd Triestino, with the scarlet, green and white of Italy at their staffs, both on their way to Port Said, Alexandria and Tripoli, lay in the Roads, we heard from the Irishman in charge of passport control that several wealthy passengers were embarking. As the Khedivial ship was due to sail in the late afternoon and the "Sitmar" at sunset, we ruled them out. The Lloyd Triestino was perfect, however. She was to embark a Roman Catholic pilgrimage which was due to arrive by special train from Jerusalem at midnight. Obviously she was the ship we needed, especially as it was the dark of the moon.

At half-past ten I alighted from a car on Haifa jetty, dressed as an Orthodox Jewish merchant, complete with long overcoat and wide-brimmed hat. Corkscrew ringlets dangled down each side of my face and I wore a beard which had cost us fifty piastres (ten shillings) to hire from a shop specializing in the supply of costumes for carnivals and amateur theatricals in Jerusalem. I had a large wallet with a couple of Egyptian pound-notes placed above a wad of cheap Syrian currency, while on my finger was a large and flashy ring, also hired from the theatrical costumiers. A bulky suit-case completed my disguise.

My elementary Arabic was just strong enough to sustain my part of

being a Jerusalem Jew during my bargaining with the boatmen for a boat passage to the Italian vessel. I haggled hard until, finally, with shrill protestations, I agreed to pay the exorbitant sum of fifteen shillings for my transport. The ring of swarthy, villainous faces smiled ingratiatingly in the lamplight as I pulled out my wallet and selected a one-pound Egyptian note, refusing to budge until I had received my twenty-five piastres change, the large lump of prismatic glass on my finger winking provocatively in the light of the single oil-lamp at the head of the stone steps, at whose feet the long, narrow pulling-boat was awaiting customers. I knew every man of that piratical gang as I took my seat on the gaily-striped cushions in her stern-sheets. I watched two rowers take their places, with the *reis* (the skipper-owner) squatting on his heels, behind and above me, the long tiller tucked under his arm.

The rowers were standing, facing the bows, pushing at the long sweeps as we left the steps. One of the longshoremen on the jetty smiled widely as he wished my boatmen good fortune and, in a minute, we were round the head of the stumpy jetty heading across the smooth sea, with the oily swell of surf just lifting us as the waves hit the shallows. An hour earlier two of our British gendarmes had left the German Pier in our dinghy, loudly announcing that they were going fishing off the camp. I knew that they were lying quietly under the counter of a Moss Line freighter, anchored on the route between the jetty and the passenger ship, and I prayed fervently that they would be alert.

The most spine-chilling part of the whole transaction lay in having the *reis* sitting on his heels behind me, but I lessened my discomfort slightly by shifting my seat until I was facing outboard with my back against the side of the boat. I had a lively sympathy with, and a vivid understanding of, what a goat tethered in a tiger-trap must feel, and I keenly envied my two comrades in the dinghy who were filling the part of the sportsmen up the tree waiting for the brute's arrival.

We were not more than 300 yards off-shore before the rowers slid the looms of their oars forward and the speed died on the boat. A cable (200 yards) away over the glassy water, the dark mass of the Moss Line ship lay silent with only a few scuttles glowing in her forecabin and along her midship superstructure. Her anchor lights and a bright cargo cluster blazed bright at the head of her accommodation-ladder. She seemed very remote, for the odds were three to one. Each of the longshoremen in my boat was a hefty brute and an experienced marine assassin who thought no more of murdering a helpless passenger than of wringing a

chicken's neck. I sat silent, sliding my blackthorn shillelagh from Galway down the wide sleeve of my coat as the *reis* stood up.

"Hand over your money and that ring, dog of a Jew," he said, quite pleasantly.

"This is robbery!" I squealed in my bad Arabic. "If you don't row me to the ship at once I shall yell for the police."

One of the rowers laughed, deep down in his chest. "You won't be the first man to scream for the help he never got," he remarked, and I saw the glint of steel as he reached for his broad-bladed fisherman's gutting-knife. They were quite happy, absolutely secure in their conviction that they were masters of the situation, and I heard them chuckle grimly as I bounded to my feet as though I was panic-stricken. My shillelagh took the *reis* along the side of his head, just beneath a skull-cap he was wearing under a neckerchief wrapped turbanwise around it. He folded instantly and went over the side; I hit the man nearest me before he even realized what was happening, and turned on the third, spitting English words at him.

"I am no helpless Jew. Do you not know the British Police, dog?" and smashed in another stroke of the old blackthorn, which he dodged sufficiently to take on his shoulder. He was game enough though, and came straight back at me. I was then a runner-up in the heavy-weight boxing finals of the championship for the British Forces in Palestine and Egypt, but he was every whit as strong as I. We crashed into the bottom boards, wrestling, gouging, using fists, teeth and feet, the longboat rolling wildly.

It ended with our dinghy thumping alongside, one of the gendarmes leaning inboard over our gunwale and scientifically hitting my adversary with a metal boat-crutch as he rose to meet the new threat. Without a sound he, too, went over the side. We waited only long enough to pull the plug out of the long, carvel-built boat before I transferred to our dinghy, where I made a parcel of the Orthodox Jewish clothing and my beard, emerging in my khaki shorts and grey-flannel shirt.

Ten minutes later we landed at the German pier ostentatiously carrying the mullet which my comrades had caught and went home to our flat. Next morning we were all very busily engaged in investigating the mystery of the longboat which had been found floating near Acre, filled to the gunwales, and with her crew of three missing. The consternation among the long-shoremen at the unexplained disaster to their comrades was profound.

Three weeks later we repeated the same tactics, though on that occasion it was two veiled women who were ferried off to a Rumanian passenger-ship bound north. That night one of the would-be assassins managed to struggle

ashore, the only survivor of four, and from that date the organized murder of intending passengers ceased in Haifa Roads.

After this, of course, it was not quite so simple for us to play the ignorant innocents. The longshoremen gave us due respect as people against whom *Fasqad* in all its virulence should be used. During the months that followed we got into our stride with our real work, the prevention of contraband-landing and gun-running on the shores, as well as stopping the spiriting away of wanted criminals and the importation of illegal immigrants. The last two categories ceased almost at once, for though the long, artificial and almost unguarded land frontiers of the Holy Land were inconvenient, they were soon far safer for unlawful traffic than the beaches over which the British Coastguard were keeping watch. After three midnight battles on the Acre beach, our truncheons and shillelagh against their boat-stretchers and gutting-knives, we convinced the inshore fishermen that the new-fangled rules about the size of the mesh in their nets was not a mere dead-letter of a law.

Gradually, too, we gained mastery over the schooners which had used the coast almost openly to land their cargoes of contraband and tobacco from Syria and their crates of uncustomed manufactured goods from Egypt. Security began to improve until we had only one really efficient and powerful smuggling organization left opposing us. This was run by Ahmet el Tajer,¹ a merchant in Beirut, who had plenty of money and a gang which obeyed him devotedly.

But there were other smugglers, extremely foul ones, engaged in drug-running, the filthiest trade of all. Hashish was grown openly in Syria and the Lebanon and there were plenty of people ready to process it into the form which wrecks countless lives, especially in Egypt. We captured small consignments of the drug, but the main traffic slipped past us until we got information that a certain shopkeeper in Beirut was one of the principal agents.

Three of our native helpers disappeared and were never seen again but, before they died, we learned that an influential ring of dope-sellers in Haifa were at the head of the arrangements for taking it down to Egypt. It was almost certain death for anyone to help us and we soon found that bribery was useless in the teeth of such opposition. David Wainwright evolved a plan and gave me the honour of implementing it. I was given some money and told to go to Beirut, pretending to be a junior officer of one of the Khedivial mail-boats. There I was to make contact with a man whom we

¹ N.B. This name is not the real one of the smuggler chief.

suspected of being an agent, in order to buy a small quantity of the drug from him. The plan was fraught with risks, for there was a great chance that I might be recognized as one of the British Coastguards at Haifa. The reason for my being selected at all was that, as I spent most of my time at sea in the launch, I was not so well known as the others who served ashore in the Port Police, while my embryonic Arabic was good enough to pass me as a sailor who had been several years on the coastal run. I was very scared during that trip to Beirut, but the plan worked, and the suspected man actually sold me a small packet of hashish, with which I returned successfully to Palestine. On each occasion that the same Khedivial ship called at Beirut during the ensuing three months, I bought a small packet of the filthy stuff, which looks very like a poor-grade cocoa made up in a flat cake. Finally, I insinuated myself into the confidence of the seller until he invited me into his private quarters at the rear of his little shop, smirked, and asked me where I disposed of my contraband.

I told him, gruffly, to mind his own business, which seemed to assure him that my discretion could be trusted. He remarked that it was time I stopped taking big risks for such a poor return as the small consignments yielded, and he murmured the equivalent of our proverb about it being just as well to hang for a sheep as a lamb. This was exactly the point that I had tried so hard to reach, but he was far too shrewd to be underestimated, so I pretended to be offended and said that I was damned if I would entangle myself in his shoddy deals. I still flatter myself that I was the embodiment of the consciously virtuous Englishman, deeply shocked at being mistaken for what I most certainly appeared to be.

He was very patient and said that I could make as much in a couple of trips as I might hope to win in years of the petty deals I had been doing. He pointed out, too, that the extremely inconvenient British Coastguard inspectors at Haifa would never suspect the British officer of a reputable mail-packet, and ended by offering twenty-five pounds Egyptian for my help, without there being any need for me to use any of my own capital.

I told him that I was not going to risk my liberty, my job and my Board of Trade "ticket" for a miserable sum like that, and we fell into a haggle from which I emerged with seventy-five pounds in my pocket, after promising that I would do the same errand for him on the next visit of my ship. We arranged that he should buy two suit-cases to carry several pounds of hashish, a very valuable consignment, which I would take back aboard with me. He sent a boy out into the bazaars to get the cases and I eagerly watched the flat cakes being hidden among the shirts and other articles with which he

packed them, I having insisted that the garments should be the outsize ones I could use. I had a cargo worth several thousand pounds when sold in small doses to addicts.

I protested against the weight of it but the smirking agent told me that I was being well paid and, as I seemed to be such a safe carrier, he meant to take full advantage of my outstanding suitability. I replied that, at least, I should be safe from treachery on his part while I was moving with such a valuable cargo. He smiled deprecatingly, saying that he had never been disloyal to any comrade, but he scarcely troubled to conceal his contempt for my intelligence and for my baseness in sinking so low as to be his hiringling.

He hinted pretty broadly what would happen to me if I tried any tricks, and then, calling a carriage, one of the victorias which were the forerunners of taxis, ordered the driver to take his honoured customer to the port. I rode as far as Bassoul's Hotel, where I paid off the driver, saying that I would walk down to the port after having some refreshment.

I boarded our police launch as she came alongside in Haifa Roads and landed with the rest of the passengers on their way to Public Health Control, but I changed into uniform in her engine-room without being seen by my late fellow-passengers. When I landed on the wharf none of the local long-shoremen even suspected that I had been away from the port. They were used to seeing us come and go on long patrols, so that our arrivals and departures were always confusing.

I was too well known in Haifa to take any further part in the operations. One of the Gendarmerie from Nazareth, a man of my own burly build and colouring, had been co-opted to play the part of the ship's officer and carry the hashish to the destination which the agent in Beirut had given me.

This was a small tobacconist and fruit-seller's shop near the railway station. David Wainwright had realized that the man to whom I was sent might be only a small-time operator, a mask for the bigger agents awaiting the large consignment I had brought, so another of our British Coastguardsmen, a fierce little chap, an ex-lieutenant-commander with a D.S.O., dressed as a tattered Muslim veiled woman, was posted squatting in the dust close by. In a nearby coffee-house three more gendarmes, disguised as drunken merchant seamen on their way to the town brothels, acted as a support party for the Muslim beggar-woman.

After an hour or so, the shopkeeper, staggering under the weight of the two suit-cases, from which my new underwear was missing, emerged cautiously and started to walk uptown, followed by the beggar-woman and

the three apparently tipsy sailors, who were making a great show of attempting to accost her. The shopkeeper entered the house of a wealthy Arab close to the station, whereupon one of the seamen discreetly faded away to use a telephone. The officer in command of the Port Police promptly filled in the blank search warrant he already held, telephoned to the camp at Ras-el-Krum for two tenders of Gendarmerie under arms, and proceeded to the house with every man he had.

The place was surrounded before any of its inmates had the least suspicion that anything was wrong. The effendi who owned it was thunder-struck when we forced his front door and rushed in before he had any chance to hide his contraband. One of his relatives "ratted" with alacrity to save his own skin, and betrayed a tobacco-smuggling concern closely allied to his relative's dope-ring. As a result I had the supreme joy of laying *Progress* alongside a schooner that same night, as soon as she was firmly inside our territorial waters. We had a strenuous fight on her upper-deck, in which my shillelagh again came in very useful against a gentleman who was fairly expert in the use of a boat-axe. We found 206 bales of Persian and Lattakia tobacco stowed in her hold or piled on deck and, while we were busy with her, our shore staff captured fifteen carts waiting to carry the contraband to the smugglers' depot, a disused mill on the Nazareth road, in which another 100 bales were found. A most profitable night for all of us. My share of the reward money financed a delightful leave among the great Crusading castles of Syria—my first of many visits to mighty Krak-of-the-Knights, Margat, Sâone, Antioch, Aleppo, Tortosa and Damascus.

THE SEAS OF OUTREMER

THE city of St. John of Acre lies snugly inside its walls on the northern horn of Haifa Bay, six or seven miles along the crescent of golden sand, which, in those days, had nothing but the malarial marshes of the Kishon between the white surf and the foothills of Galilee.

I loved Acre and schemed hard to have my launch based in its broken, ancient port, which was used only by the little two-masted schooners running the coastal trade. It has a long, sea-smashed mole, culminating in the ruin of the Tower of Flies, over which the blue Mediterranean breaks in eternal white spray. My authorities needed much convincing that we could work more efficiently from Acre than we could from Haifa, where our every move was watched by the people whom we were fighting, but they agreed at last and *Progress* transferred her moorings to the Crusaders' last capital.

It was a correct move from a security angle, besides being a welcome one, so my conscience was easy. In southerly gales, or even in a sharp blow from the south-westward, we had to run to Haifa for shelter, but, when the wind was anywhere from due west right round north to east, the crumbling sadly-gapped mole gave us all the protection we needed. Acre was a strange and lovely place in those early days of our Mandate; its circle of walls was complete except for two breaches in the northern curtain through which roads had been driven, and a sea-torn gap on the south-west corner near the ruins of St. Andrew's Church.

Cannon-balls fired by British wooden-walls in 1841 were still embedded in its walls, while, forming an inner rampart, the remains of the fortifications of the Crusader kingdom frowned down. There were marks of damage inflicted by Napoleon when he laid siege to the fortress that was so gallantly defended by the seamen and Marines of the Royal Navy. Towering over the whole city was the huge, square keep of the Hospitallers' Castle, which we had converted into Palestine's Central Convict Prison. It was governed by Abu George, a colourful character who once had been a warrant officer of the Royal Artillery.

My first encounter with this redoubtable person happened one evening when I arrived at Acre to ask his assistance in a drive I was making against Syrian gun-runners and smugglers, whose partners were using the decrepit

Arab village which has grown up among the ruins of the Crusader Castle of Montfort, the mother-fortress of the original Teutonic Knights and one of the keys to the mediaeval perimeter of St. John of Acre. I liked Abu George, a burly figure, older than most of us, a grizzled veteran who held down, by the sheer strength of his personality and his innate courage, not only the hundreds of convicts in his inadequately staffed prison but also the hardy mountaineers of his district. It was from him that I learned the fundamental lesson that the Arab dearly loves the man who can "grandstand" a little, so long as panache is backed by real worth and courage.

I learned, too, that the mediaeval virtue of dealing with danger in a picturesque and flamboyant manner is the only way to obtain their respect and to ensure against one's being secretly murdered by poison or killed in ambush. It was a lesson I never forgot; if ever a man approximated to one of the hardy men-at-arms who served the Frankish barons of the first generation after the capture of Jerusalem, then Abu George was he.

I went to his office in the one-storeyed building outside the moat of the Hospitaller Castle, across which a narrow bridge led to a postern gate set high in the curtain, and gave him David Wainwright's letter asking for assistance in tackling the gun-runners. Abu George was a warm friend of Wainwright's and made me very welcome. He was married to an Italian wife and had some bonny children, all living in his home outside the present walls, almost exactly on the side of the Maledictum, the Accursed Tower, which gained such honour in the final siege when the Crusading kingdom's last traces were swept into the sea.

He said he would do all he could, took me around the prison and offered me the hospitality of his home. His wife and family, fervent Catholics, were absent in Haifa, taking part in the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. To my embarrassed surprise he insisted that I should occupy the large, carved, mahogany double bed usually occupied by his wife and himself.

Promising me that a patrol of mounted police, with a spare horse, would be ready at dawn, we had supper, after which his Arab orderly returned to barracks, leaving us alone in the house. The soft night sea-wind was stirring the flowers and pepper trees in his garden as we discussed a couple of bottles of Adom Atik, good wine from the Rishon-le-Zion cellars, before we turned in. I protested again when he dragged a truckle-cot beneath the yard-high sill of the window facing the city and insisted upon my occupying the vast double bed.

The two windows towards the sea were lined with steel, Abu George explaining that the armour had been placed there in 1916 by the former

Turkish commandant of Acre for fear of machine-gunning by British naval light craft. He shut these two windows, but left the one facing towards the city half-open. I did not particularly like having the paraffin oil-lamp left burning dimly, but I could not say so to my host.

He woke once during the night to suggest that we should have a drink, and, with a bone-dry mouth, I was quite willing. When he found that the short ladder needed to reach the loft in his kitchen, where his liquor was stored, had been taken away for repairs and suggested that I should bend down while he stood on my shoulders. I jibbed. Abu George was at least sixteen stone and I could not agree that a permanently curved spine was worth a bottle of German beer. We compromised on cool water brought down from the mountains by the ancient aqueduct which has always been both the city's bane and its blessing.

At dawn the trampling of the police horses wakened me and, after a quick breakfast, I thanked him for his hospitable courtesy.

"Not at all," Abu George replied. "I'm only sorry that my plan did not work. The swine hadn't the guts to do what they threatened."

He explained that he was at blood-feud with the Bedouins of the Er Ramshe tribe because of a couple of their warriors whom he had hanged. They had sworn to have their revenge that night and so I, who was very much of the same build as himself, had been given his double bed to act as his tethered goat. His hope was that the Bedouins would come to the open, lighted window and take a shot at the figure, very similar to his, lying in the big bed. From his lair under the protection of the high sill, armed with two pistols, Abu George was confident that he would be able to wipe out the entire murder-gang.

He was genuinely surprised at my lack of appreciation of his plan and was so hurt at my freely expressed sentiments that he took refuge in his seniority and told me not to be insubordinate. I chuckled mightily later on, after I had time to appreciate the colossal impertinence and, as I was fairly successful against the Tershiha gun-runners, all was square. It was mainly through Abu George's immense influence that my days in Acre were made so very comfortable, for the citizens were only too eager to fawn on the protégé of their redoubtable police chief.

The inhabitants of Acre, before their expulsion in 1948, were one of the strangest and most hybrid people in the world. For many centuries the Sultans of Turkey sent political exiles from their widespread Empire to drag out their lives in this remote fortress. Consequently, the Acre folk were a cross-bred crew, descended from a *mélange* of Albanians, Croats,

Slavs, Greeks, Bulgars, Serbs, negroes, Arabs, Turks, Druze, Kurds and every other race that has ever obeyed his Imperial Majesty of Stamboul. They were just as mixed in their morals and in their ideas of life as they were in blood and nationality. There was no single facet or refinement of evil which was not in active and nightly practice in the tall, narrow houses lining the cobbled streets of the walled city. If any of the later Crusading chroniclers could have returned to St. John of Acre they would have found that most of the strictures they made of the city, when ruled by the Seventeen Princes, were still as true in 1922 and '23 as they were in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

We were offered amorous intrigues by ladies of wealthy households and exquisite deftness, whose skins were as creamy, and whose eyes as blue-green as those of their Circassian ancestress, or of the Georgian nobles who once dragged out their lives under the displeasure of the Ottoman monarchs. Abu George stiffened our will to chastity by taking us on a visit to the small Government hospital, where the local devotees of Aphrodite were being treated for the results of their sins. Acre had the highest incidence of venereal diseases on the whole coast of the Levant. Not even Beirut, filled with White Russian women making the Grand Tour, which had started in Constantinople in 1918 and, by way of the Levant, Egypt, Tunis and Algiers, would end, years later, in the stews of Casablanca, was more dangerous to the amorous.

One of the places I liked most in the little city was the Arsenal, crouched beneath the keep of the Hospitaller Castle. Long, low, vaulted buildings of mellowed stone formed three sides of a quadrangle half-buried in jungle. In the chambers were hundreds of thousands of cannon-balls, heaped in long pyramids of individual calibres, along with stands of flint-lock muskets, cases of single-, double-, triple- and even four-barrelled pistols. There were boxes of musket-balls, flints and spare locks, but the most interesting objects of all were a few guns bearing the badges of the 18th British ships-of-war, including one with the crest of H.M.S. *Theseus*, whose men were landed to help in the defence against Napoleon Bonaparte.

The most curious weapon of all was one I can only describe as the first rapid-fire gun ever built. It consisted of a solid block of wood, about three feet long, thirty inches high and tapering from four inches of thickness at its top to twenty at the base. In it were set pistols, with short musket-barrels replacing them where the timber was thicker, all secured in rows so that their locks, fitted with percussion caps, protruded at a uniform distance on the inside. It was probably meant to be set down in any breach forced by an

enemy in the walls, while behind it the operator sat, armed with a hammer in each hand. He was meant to play it like a satanic xylophone, to shower bullets on the assaulting party while its bulk of timber gave cover from attackers below. To make it even more deadly a short gun-barrel, of about two-inch bore, was set, low down, at each side, to discharge a sleet of grape-shot.

I do not think it could ever have been used in actual warfare; the percussion caps made it too late a weapon to have been employed against Napoleon's grenadiers and chausseurs, but it may have been ready, and loaded, when Admiral Stopford landed his Marines in 1841 to drive the Egyptians out of St. John of Acre. An interesting marble memorial-plaque of considerable size was set in a wall of the bazaars, to commemorate the fallen officers and men of Sir Sidney Smith's landing-party and some of Stopford's marines. I recall the name of a Major Oldfield being on it.

While I am talking about memorials, there was an outstanding relic of the Crusade in which I took a personal and most particular interest. This was an ancient altar stone in the floor at the foot of the long flight of stone stairs leading from the upper gallery to the battlements of the Hospitallers' Keep; set there, centuries ago, by the Muslim conquerors to desecrate it. I deduced that it must have been torn from one of the principal churches of ancient St. John of Acre, as otherwise the fanatics would not have gone to such trouble. Maybe it was the stone of the High Altar of the Hospitallers, or else of the cathedral which stood on the site of the modern mosque.

I raised it from its prone position of indignity, where seven centuries of paynim feet had trampled it, and set it, with the aid of four convict masons lent to me by Abu George, into the wall close beside where it had lain. It is still there.

It was done on the evening when I had to make up my mind whether I would quit the Holy Land or not. The end of my year of engagement had come and nearly all the Gendarmerie had refused to sign for a further twelve months. This had taken our authorities at Sarafand so much by surprise that they had no replacements ready for the large number who wished to go, and as, by that time, there was not a single Imperial or Indian soldier serving in the Holy Land, it would have been garrisoned by half a dozen men and the strange, blue-grey dog "Felix" which had become our mascot. Felix was the biggest dog I have ever known, with hair nearly a foot long and of no breed I have ever seen before or since.

The authorities promptly offered a bounty for men who would continue to serve for another two months, and many agreed to do so, while the

Colonial Office signed on a number of discharged short-service ex-Guardsmen, whom they obtained at a cut rate, three shillings a day less than they paid us. This parsimony was to prove disastrous, as the new recruits had no inkling, until they landed in Palestine, that they were cheaper troops than the few remaining first-year men among whom they served.

I had to make up my mind whether I would sign on for another twelve months or take my discharge, and it worried me so much that I sat alone on the lofty ramparts of the Keep trying to reach a decision. My resolve to follow the trade of a mercenary soldier was no less clear, and I was quite ready to go to Argentina to do my conscript service as the second stage of my planned career. But I came to the conclusion that bitter, bloodthirsty old harridan though Palestine is, I loved her and so I temporized, convincing myself that another year would not hurt my chances.

If I had been kept at military duties with my platoon, as had most of my comrades, I should doubtless have been as bored and disgusted as most of them, but I was doing an interesting job. I spent much time at sea and I was happy. I was growing to know, and to love, the peoples of the country for their mediaeval courtesy, their virtues and their vices. As I came down that long flight of stairs carrying a lantern, I could almost feel the flutter of the black mantles which once had brushed the bare stone walls so many centuries before. As I stepped off the lowermost stair to avoid setting my desecrating sole on the ancient altar stone, I had the sudden desire to rescue it from its degradation, to make reparation for the work of the ancient fanatics who had sullied it.

I was guilty of yet another piece of sheer sentimentality while I was in Acre; concerning the gun bearing the crest of the old *Theseus*, Sir Sidney Smith's flagship against Napoleon. While we were living in the city the Palestine Government decided to "raise the wind" by selling the contents of the ancient arsenal for scrap-iron and some Italian firm bought everything for a few hundred pounds. A series of tramp-ships, all of doddering vintage, anchored off the Tower of Flies and loaded the stacks of cannon-balls, bar-shot, grape-shot, lagrange, cressets and all the other types which had been so deadly in the days of wooden ships and sail. Many of the guns from the ramparts, as well as those mouldering in the arsenal, were likewise shipped, and it was little consolation that one of the tramps blew up as she sailed for Italy, for some of the huge, spherical mortar-shells (a few were of at least twelve-inch calibre) still held active gunpowder.

One moonless night we three Coastguardsmen worked like slaves loading *Theseus'* gun into a country-cart. It was a desperate labour in the

darkness and heat of the arsenal, crawling with snakes and scorpions and alive with mosquitoes. We rigged sheer-legs and used the tackle we had brought with us to lift the heavy piece into the two-horsed flat-bottomed cart, which had detachable planks forming its sides. We crept out of the north-eastern breach in the walls and reached the heights of Mont St. Jean, the long mound where Richard Lion-heart threw down Leopold of Austria's flag, and Napoleon pitched his headquarters, without being seen.

There we had more hard work, digging a grave for the ton-and-a-half relic of Britain's naval glory, before we levered it off the cart. We filled in the sand, obliterated the tracks of the cart and drove back into the city, leaving the vehicle in the Khan el Franji, the cloisters of the great Benedictine convent of Crusading times from which its holy sisters issued, on the last day of the kingdom, with their faces slashed by their own scissors, hoping to win a quick death from the Muslim conquerors and thus escape the violation of their dedicated virginity.

So far as I know *Theseus'* gun still rusts gently away in the sand where we put it; a better fate than being transformed into shells which eventually made widows of English, New Zealand, Australian and Indian wives.

Things, meanwhile, were moving swiftly. The smuggler chiefs in Syria made up their minds to blast their way through us and to land their contraband on our beaches at all costs. One night we heard a heavy report in the Haifa anchorage, where the dumb-lighters, the only means of discharging cargo ships in the Roads, lay at anchor. One of them sank and, when we investigated, we found that she had been struck by a small, high-explosive shell. Our informants told us that a fast launch from Beirut or Tyre had been approaching the shore near the Kishon's outfall to land tobacco bales, when its crew, afraid they might run into some ambush of the British Coastguard, almost rammed a darkened vessel and the overwrought gunner in their bows pressed his trigger.

This gun of theirs was a very serious business, for we mounted nothing heavier than our rifles and a single Lewis gun which we had just "won" from a dump in the Haifa police barracks because it did not seem to be "on charge" to anyone. Our requests for a gun were disregarded by Jerusalem. We had no illusions—if we ran our heads into trouble and were wiped out in a sea skirmish, no one was going to be particularly interested. There might be a formal protest to the French High Commissioner in Syria and an apologetic reply from him, but that would be all. We should be forgotten just as quickly as was the British superintendent of the Quarantine Lazarette, whom I

found murdered on the beach between Haifa railway station and his camp under the palm-trees further along the sand.

We made up our minds not to let the smugglers get away with things quite so easily and, when Jerusalem rebuffed our plea, we decided to arm ourselves. There were several small cannon lying on a bastion of St. John of Acre, just above the port, which had not been collected when the rest of the city's ordnance was sent off to Italy. One of these guns was a sweet little piece made of brass, with the Royal Navy's Crown and fouled Anchor on its breech. Suitably loaded it was capable of throwing a three-pound shot for close on 1,000 yards and was in better condition than the iron cannons of later Belgian manufacture lying near by.

A nice little carriage was built in the prison, complete with trucks and trunnions, and we manhandled the brass cannon on to the launch during one dark night when the people of Acre were all abed. We had no wish to betray the fact that His Majesty's Palestinian revenue cutter *Progress* carried as her main armament a muzzle-loading brass three-pounder which had been used as a saluting-piece in Nelson's day!

We had to mount the gun on top of the engine-room and to cut down space in its already cribbed interior by erecting timber shores to take the shock of the discharge. We could not train the cannon to either side, although a system of wedges and quoins allowed us to depress and elevate it to obtain different ranges. The carriage was lashed securely to the deck with its barrel laid along the launch's fore-and-aft line, pointing exactly ahead. The only way to aim, therefore, was to point our ship itself at the target.

We had plenty of black powder captured from a small illegal camel caravan carrying it from a secret factory in the caves of the Galilee hills to the quarrymen of Bethlehem and Hebron. With a supply of balls of the requisite size, scavanged in forgotten corners of the arsenal, we put to sea and disappeared below the western horizon.

We spent two busy days, twenty miles offshore, away from the sight and sound of spying eyes and ears, carrying out our gun-mounting trials. I still grin when I recall them, but they were successful and, years afterwards when I took *Eskimo Nell* out to sea from Derna, in a whole gale, as Rommel's Afrika Korps closed down on us, we had an equally makeshift armament which did its duty just as nobly. But that is not a story to be told here.

We fired several practice-shots; the first few rounds with the greatest trepidation for fear that the launch's timbers would not stand the shock of the discharge. The little saluting-piece was fired by a touch-hole and, as we

had gone to the trouble of making cartridges to hold our black powder (they were actually sewn by Muna, the honey-skinned little Muslim mistress of one of our shore-staff, a willing and most eager girl, more sinned against by her own folk than sinning), we achieved a good rate of fire. The drill was to thrust a thin spike down the touch-hole to break open the cloth cartridge which had been rammed down the muzzle, after which a small pyramid of black powder was poured on to the breach above the touch-hole. We waited for the proper moment, when the launch rose on a swell, to grind the glowing linstock on to the little pile of powder. A split second later there was a terrific report, two yards of flame, a cloud of yellow-grey smoke and the launch would tremble in every strake and rivet as the ball sped away in a visible parabola.

We rounded Cape Carmel an hour before midnight and steamed down the bay close to the shore, just far enough offshore to be visible to the front of the sing-song coffee-houses which, in those days, studded the waterfront. Six hundred yards from the beach we fired a charge and a half of powder, well rammed home and held by four wads. Six feet of flame jetted out over our bows, while the rolling thunder of the echoes rumbled along Mount Carmel's grey old flanks. Working like slaves, we discharged a second round within fifty seconds while we increased to full speed. Five minutes later, half a mile farther out to sea and close to the mouth of the River Kishon, we fired a third shot. Just before dawn we returned to our mooring-buoy, fifty yards off the jetty, and became an immediate objective for scores of inquisitive eyes and chattering tongues. On our fore-deck was a shapeless mass of tarpaulin, with a long and suggestive out-thrust part swathed in canvas, which looked like a gun-barrel, but was really part of a large oar.

We kept constant guard over our shrouded weapon and, having sent out Arab policemen on leave before the operation of arming the cutter commenced, our secret was safe, while rumours spread that we had been given a gun by a British destroyer in order to deal with the Syrian smugglers. There were even wilder tales that we had engaged and sunk a smuggler craft, which, being quite false, we did our utmost to encourage by half-admissions and apparently stupid denials.

There was no real trouble until one night about a week later, when we were running along a patrol-line about three miles offshore between St. John of Acre and the frontier at Ras-el-Nakoura, the Ladder of Tyre, where there are the rock-hewn remains of a Phoenician port at the foot of the white cliffs. There was a light breeze from the north-westward and the sea was calm with a long, regular swell.

We had made a couple of runs in each direction and, with the red light on the ruins of the Crusader church of St. Andrew, in the sea-worn breach, at the south-western angle of Acre's walls, bearing two points on our port bow and the dark patch of the trees and gardens of Zeeb almost abeam, we were standing comfortably south. The long bulk of Mount Carmel, cutting off the lowermost stars, was right ahead of us, at its tip a white light flashing above the monastery of St. Elias, the great Mother-house of the Carmelite monks, the Pied Friars of the Crusade, when we sighted a dark loom to seaward, perhaps a mile away. We recognized it as a small schooner, running free, on the same course as ourselves. I put the helm over and asked "Hooky" for full speed on our decrepit engines. The schooner, hearing the sound of our clattering exhaust as we drew nearer, instantly eased her helm and brought herself more before the wind as she started a dash for the three-mile limit, where we would have no legal power to stop and board her. We heard, too, the uncertain *pop-pop-popping* of her exhaust as she started up her auxiliary engine.

She soon widened the gap between us, whereupon I fired a Verey light as a signal for her to stop. When that had no effect I put a burst of Lewis gun fire across her bows. Her reply was a spangling of tiny flashes from her counter. We heard bullets humming past us and saw splashes of phosphorescent water as some hit the surface close alongside. At least one hit the woodwork of the launch.

I ordered our gun to be made ready, but the Second Hand quickly pointed out that we were already outside the territorial limit. We had had recent and humiliating experience of certain lawyers and knew that the Government in Jerusalem would not thank us for becoming involved in some international incident. Just as we were about to turn away we caught the sound of high-speed engines from well inshore. Without much hope of catching the craft, for our own speed was hopeless, we realized that the schooner must have been a decoy meant to draw us out to sea, while the launch beached her contraband; I pointed our bows well ahead of the noises, hoping to intercept.

There was a pencil of flame and something far heavier than any bullet hurtled over us. The smugglers fired again from our starboard quarter; we were being engaged by the armed launch about which we had heard so much. With the long swell under our quarter, our craft was rolling and pitching with a corkscrew motion which made things very uncomfortable and most difficult for our rudimentary gunnery. As we chattered along, bumping and threshing in the swell, the Second Hand waited for his chance to catch the correct moment of rise and fall before grinding his match down

on the little heap of powder on the touch-hole. Meanwhile I held our bows trained on the target, although it was almost impossible to keep on our bearing as the smuggler was much faster than we. I felt as though our gunner would never fire, a most skilled operation, for he had to allow for a split second of delay between the powder on the touch-hole flaring and the detonation of the charge in the gun. A flash of flame, a red-orange gush of fire that lit us up as though held in a lightning flash, and then the kick of the three-pounder cannon which almost made the launch fall apart as it recoiled against our forward speed. The Second Hand was working like a lunatic, sponging out the barrel, ramming in another cloth cartridge, followed by the ball and a wad, before he rimed out the touch-hole and pierced the cartridge beneath. Scattering another little pile over the touch-hole he crouched over the breach, match glowing in his hand, ready for another shot.

In those fifteen seconds the smuggler fired twice, and one shell passed so close that we felt the wind of it before our gun roared again. When the smoke cleared, we heard the launch's engines working at even higher speed as it crossed our "T" and headed for the open sea across our bows, running for the three-mile limit. I brought our Lewis gun into play, but the range and the crazy motion of our own craft made it almost useless, so that both launch and schooner reached safety outside Palestine's territorial waters.

We had won a tactical victory, however, for the contraband-runners decided that it was too risky to land their cargoes on our beaches while the British Coastguard launch was at sea with a gun of its own.

We had plenty of other interesting work, including transporting a small motor-boat by road to the Sea of Galilee and carrying out a successful operation on that lovely, sudden-storm lake. We arrested the murderers of a Customs official at the water-melon port of Mina Abu Zaboura, five miles south of the vast mass of tumbled ruins and fragmentary walls which is all that remains of Imperial Caesarea. A lucky landing we once made on its mouldering wharves saved the life of two Orthodox Greek monks living in their small hermitage close to Herod's amphitheatre, which still stands close to the ruins of the walls that St. Louis rebuilt during his abortive crusade.

We were recalled to duty with the Gendarmerie for a couple of weeks after Sir Herbert Samuel's escort (he was then High Commissioner) was ambushed in Upper Galilee. Let me record, too, the respect which the cool-headed, clear-souled courage of Sir Herbert (now Lord) Samuel inspired in our hard-bitten fighting men. He knew the risks he so quietly took, no intelligent man could have been ignorant of them, yet he faced the dangers

of riding a horse through the length and breadth of the Holy Land, meeting Arabs and villagers with seldom more than a couple of our men at his back. The Arab loves a brave man and they deeply respected Sir Herbert for his unassuming courage, as much as they appreciated the fact that he was utterly just. I can think of no other High Commissioner, except perhaps Lord Plumer, who so quietly, and yet so strongly, held the esteem of all the creeds and races of the polyglot Holy Land.

During those two years of my service with the Coastguard there were most significant changes in Palestine. Zionist immigrants began to arrive in large numbers and we of the Port Police had the handling of most of them. Generally, the Jewish passengers reached Haifa in parties several hundred strong, usually from Black Sea ports, often in ships which were fit for nothing but Davy Jones's locker.

Herded together, men, women and children, young and old alike, in accommodation that was not sufficient, even in terms of a cattle-boat, for a quarter of their number, these often gently-nurtured and always sensitive, folk lived in conditions far worse than those of an old-time slaver running the Middle Passage. I often vomited as we ran alongside to put the medical officer aboard, for the reeking stink lay like a palpable miasma along the sea's face for a couple of hundred yards before you reached them.

With practically no sanitary amenities and little water, with no food except what they could carry in the form of dried black bread in their sacks and some smoked fish, these people had lived, often for weeks, aboard these hell-ships, sleeping in corners of the holds or on the upper-decks. Excrement and other rubbish equally as foul stained the decks and clogged the scuppers, while the stench of unwashed humanity grappled your lungs and nostrils.

Yet, and here was the astonishing miraculous fact, there was neither misery nor sordid wretchedness aboard these terrible tubs. There was no room for anything but exalted exultation in the shining eyes of those hundreds of faces crowded at the rusty rails, singing ancient Hebrew melodies. Their plaintive music swelled over the waters as these folks drank in the sight of the long swell of Mount Carmel, the blue hills of Galilee and the sharp peak on the intermediate range, which was Jotapata, where their remote ancestors died so valiantly resisting the Roman oppressors.

We had to appear harsh and heartless in order to maintain order among those milling hundreds, all keenly anxious to set their feet on the holy soil of Israel. When we landed them, under strict guard, on the mole, hundreds of relatives were waiting, having gained entrance through the gaps in the

barbed-wire fence. Times were bad in Eastern Europe, so that, as we brought the flat barges crammed with glory-faced Jews returning home, there were extravagant scenes of joy, as well as of bitter heartbreak when shouted queries brought dire tidings of loved ones left behind to the persecutors.

It was essential that the immigrants should remain strictly segregated until they were disinfected and examined by our Public Health officials. The danger of every disease, from bubonic plague downwards, was far too great for us to allow them to mingle with their friends and relatives until they had undergone quarantine. Which was all fair and reasonable enough in theory; in practice, however, it was almost unbelievably brutal. Let me describe a typical scene, and there were scores such, when an immigrant ship arrived in Haifa Roads in those earlier years of the Mandate.

The crowd of Jews waiting on the quay would surge forward as the barge drew near, anxious to discover relatives whom they had left behind in Europe. When they found, as generally they did, that none of their relations were among the newcomers, they became hysterical and would shout out the names they had in mind, frantically begging for news.

The trouble was that our Arab policemen became nervous and excited and used their sticks and camel-hide whips. By alternative cajoling, swearing, pleading and bullying, however, we usually managed to keep order, but, if things got really bad, we grabbed those who had broken through our cordon and hauled them off to quarantine, along with the newcomers. Stumbling through the heavy dust of the port and the deep sand of the foreshore, they passed the hauled-out hulls of lighters being repaired by Arab boat-builders, who sneered and jeered at the stinking, staggering throng of men and women, carrying on their backs the few pitiful bundles which constituted their entire worldly wealth. The immigrants were closely escorted to the square bath-house, close on half a mile from the port, by one of the British Coastguards and a party of native police.

There was a strange glory about this shambling procession of dirty, wan-faced people. A majesty showed in their eyes and there was a strange light in the faces of these folk of an ancient race who were attaining, in their own persons, the hitherto seemingly impossible ambition of returning to the blessed land from which their forbears were driven so many centuries before. Their songs were Hebrew psalms of the Going-up; to them the answer to their age-old prayer was being given, not "next year in Jerusalem", but *now*, today! These were the Zionists returning to Zion! Few of us fully appreciated what was happening in front of our eyes, nor grasped the historical significance of what we saw.

At the bath-house, a large, single-storeyed, square building with blue shutters, standing on the open shore, where now one of the busiest traffic centres of the new port exists, these immigrants had to file in, drop all their bundles, strip naked and pass into two big chambers fitted with showers. The women went into one, the men into the other. All their foetid baggage had to be searched personally by one of us to make sure that no firearms or explosives were hidden in it. Pistols had been carried into their bathing-hall by some of the nude women on an earlier occasion, so that a British Coast-guard was always stationed, thereafter, among these scores of naked females. No European woman-searcher was available; we could not trust a patriotic Jewish woman to do the work and the newcomers would have resented, actively and bitterly, an Arab policewoman or Customs searcher. Therefore it had to be us. At first I objected, for, quite apart from being unable to appreciate massed nude femininity, I knew the dangers that a solitary male can run when faced by a mob of women. Years before another midshipman and I were attacked by a mob of women who were working aboard our ship in dry-dock, when there were only a few officers and no crew aboard. I escaped by using my heels, but my shipmate suffered many, and most varied, indignities before he was released by his female captors.

I need not have feared; most of the newcomers were from Russia where, as I had seen during my service in the Crimea, the whole population of a seaside town pours down to bathe in the summer evenings with no prurience or false ideas of modesty.

Some hours later we paraded our charges, with their clothing and belongings fumigated, and started off for the quarantine camp, another mile along the beaches. This stood among some palm-groves on the very edge of the pestilential Kishon marsh, one of the most malarial regions in the Holy Land of those days and close to the mouth of the little stream. Tents were the only accommodation for anyone not travelling first class, which few did; tents long before condemned as unserviceable by the British Army. These were pitched inside barbed-wire apron-fences whose perimeters were patrolled by armed Arab quarantine guards. No bedding was provided, no mosquito nets and the sanitary conveniences were no more than rudimentary. Anopheles mosquitoes swarmed so densely off their breeding-grounds in the adjacent Kishon marshes (now drained and made into the oil refinery) that the town of Haifa, more than two miles away, had the highest malarial death-rate in all Palestine.

Conditions were frightful inside the quarantine camp in those days, but I will not go into them, they may be easily imagined. The superintendent, an

Englishman, was murdered by Arabs in the most atrocious circumstances; I was leading the patrol which found his naked, strangled and stabbed body wallowing in the surf where he had been thrown as he was returning, late at night, to his hut under the palm-trees.

There were many other incidents in which we played our part, most of them afloat. Some were very nasty, including an ambush sprung on us among the ruins of the Templar fortress, Castle Pilgrim, at Athlit. We dealt with murders, robberies, smuggling, rape and arson during the water-melon season when schooners from all the Eastern Mediterranean used Mina Abu Zaboura (now part of a fashionable plage near the big town of Petach Tikvah), and Caesarea, as well as a dozen other landing-places on what was then a most deserted coast.

A Druze rebellion broke out against the French Mandatory in Syria and we Coastguards did long spells of duty on the frontier to prevent valuable loot being smuggled in. French Colonials and Foreign Legionaries were fighting the Druze, one of the most martial and courageous peoples in the world. I saw a lot of this war, for the Druze were very friendly towards Britain, as they had every reason to be, and welcomed us in their villages, although we were very careful not to carry offensive weapons while staying with them.

It was a horrible little war of the bitter "colonial" type, "white man's burden" nonsense. All the more poignant because the Druze, who are not Semitic, are an older "white" race than any upstart Western Europeans. They are not Orthodox Muslim, either, as they acknowledge Hakim as a later Prophet. On several occasions I had the joy of seizing loot on its way to famous business establishments inside and outside Palestine, especially immediately after the French artillery bombarded Damascus, when great collections, like those of the Azzam Palace, were forcibly dispersed by plunderers.

I was living a page of life lifted straight out of the days of the Latin Kingdom. In our makeshift blockhouses on the borders of Syria we saw only too many evidences of the treachery and bad faith between the French and British Mandatories, just as there once had been between the great Military Orders and among the vassals of the Crusading monarchs. We occasionally received orders which showed, contemptuously enough, that our masters considered us as unimaginative and unintelligent brutes of soldiery. We obeyed; being mercenaries there was nothing else we could do.

I once stopped a large herd of sheep being driven north towards the Jebel Druze. Around each animal's body, hidden under the long wool, were

cotton bandoliers of rifle ammunition. The shepherds openly confessed that they had brought the cartridges from a ship which had discharged them at the then almost unknown port of Akaba on the Red Sea, and protested they had been told that they would suffer no interference on their route north. In those days, remember, there were no roads running down to the ancient vestiges of Solomon's Port on the Red Sea; no one in authority ever patrolled the long tracks the Crusaders had used between their citadel of Kerak-in-Moab, *via* Montreale-in-the-Desert to supply the Ile de Graye, whose grey walls still stand guard above the shark-infested strait that lies between it and the shores of Sinai.

Foreign Legionaries, anxious to desert, occasionally approached our barbed wire; I remember one party who, at first, were not, technically, deserters at all.

I was called one dawn to our apron-fence by my sentry, who said that a party of Druze warriors wished to see me. By this time my Arabic was becoming fairly intelligible—I suppose I had a vocabulary of, possibly, 5000 words—and although my grammar was still somewhat of an exhilarating adventure to my Arab friends, I was able to carry on long conversations and in taking my place at a fire and telling a story as well as most. The Arab loves a tale well told and I had already learned how to “pep-up” Red Riding Hood, the Three Bears, or Dick Whittington into an hour and a half of exciting narrative. Tales from the *Thousand and One Nights*, slightly altered and given a Western tinge in their embellishments and backgrounds, further enhanced one's reputation. I once found that a paraphrase of Scott's *Talisman* lasted me a whole week, especially as every word said in praise of the Sultan Saladin was lapped up by my audience.

To resume: the Druze chieftain explained that his prisoners had begged for their lives on the grounds that they were not Frenchmen at all. If this was so, he asked, did I not consider it an even worse offence for foreigners, who had no real interest in the struggle, to fight against patriots defending their homeland against foreign infidels? It was a tricky problem, for if I agreed with him, then the Druzes, who remained all the while on their own side of the border, might kill their prisoners. To make matters worse, a sergeant among the captured soldiers protested furiously that he had not wanted to surrender at all, and had done so only because his men were such a set of cowards that they had rendered him helpless.

In scarifying language he expressed his opinion of a machine-gun which should have been on the scrapheap for twenty years, and its inferior, perished ammunition. It appeared that the gun had jammed hopelessly when

this Foreign Legion patrol was attacked by an overwhelming force of Druze. To make matters worse, the hillmen scoffingly refused to employ their own firearms against the trapped soldiers and contented themselves with rolling boulders downhill until the legionaries had no other choice than to surrender or be crushed to death.

It cost me half an hour of hard talking to convince the chieftain that his prisoners were poor, bewildered, oppressed men, every whit as much victims of Western greed and callousness as were the Druze people themselves. I do not think that the sheikh believed one word in ten, but he was a sportsman and finally asked me what would happen if he gave me his captives. I told him that they would be sent down to the great prison of St. John of Acre, where, in due course, the consuls of their own countries would pay for them to go to their homes. In any case they would not again fight to enslave the heroic Druze.

We had many such incidents but there was only one in which I saw or heard of a British deserter from the Foreign Legion. He came running towards our wire one dawn, yelling that he was British, but, when he was still a couple of hundred yards short of the international boundary, some Algerian cavalrymen swooped down and carried him bodily away. There was nothing I could do to aid the screaming deserter, who kept shrieking that he was British and would have to face a firing-squad.

Perhaps the main reason why I signed on for a third period of twelve months in the Gendarmerie was that, while laying no claims to being idealistic or altruistic, I had come to love Palestine and to enjoy the life I was leading. Maybe, as had been exemplified by my becoming a monastic novice, it was because I was a mediaevaly-minded person. More likely still, I was just too lazy to change.

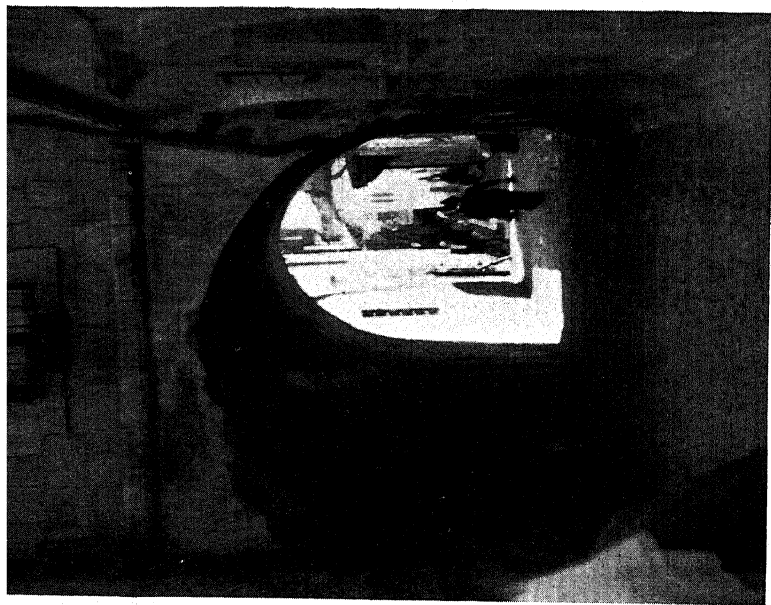
I had no one in the whole wide world who was dependent on me. There was no person who would be particularly upset if I stopped an Arab's bullet, or died of malaria, poison or blackwater. I had been too long away from any intimate contact with my father, mother and only brother to be anything but a shadowy figure to them. I had no home and I did not want one; the main reason why I had taken no leave to England. Instead, I made one voyage in a schooner through the Isles of the Cyclades and the Dodecanese to Smyrna, and a second leave I spent in exploring the Isle of Rhodus, off Tortosa, one of the most fascinating places in the world, as its one industry for thirty centuries has been building ships. The Rhodians are fine craftsmen, enjoying, and employing, the accumulated skills of their 3000 years. I completed that leave by revisiting the ruins of the



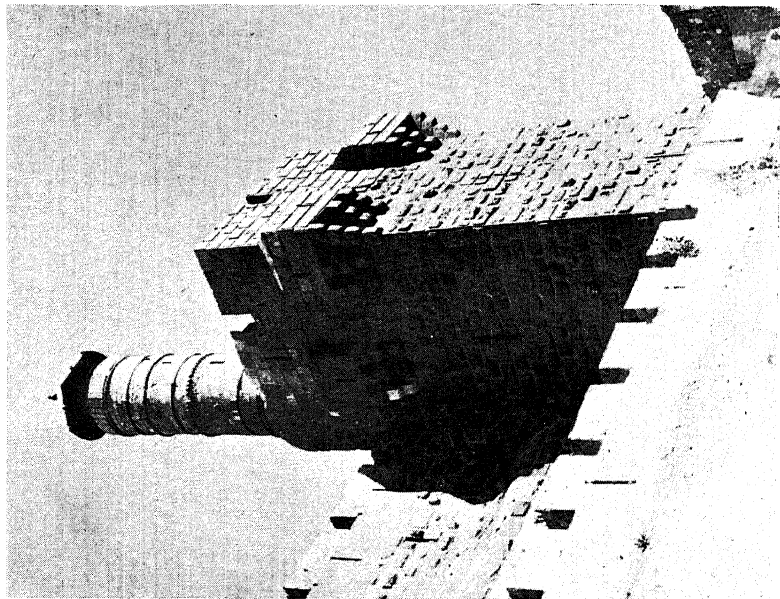
Girls erecting defences of Jewish Colony



Colonists at work in Galilee



Via Dolorosa, Jerusalem



Castle of the Pisans, Jerusalem. South-eastern Tower

Crusading cathedral at Tortosa and thence, on mule-back, going to the mighty walls of Krak-of-the-Knights, standing serene and strong on its barren hill-top, for all the world like a mighty battleship breasting the seas as she heads towards her foe away on the horizon.

I returned to Krak-des-Chevaliers many times during my years in the Holy Land, so I will leave that glorious place-of-arms-and-prayers to be described some other day. I rode thence to Sâone, that strangest of all Norman fortresses, some miles north of Krak, with its deep rock-hewn ditch and the monolithic pinnacle that the knights left standing in its middle to support the length of their drawbridge. Over the Lebanon I went and came back to the coast by way of Margat, a castle almost as mighty as Krak-of-the-Knights, along Godfrey and Tancred's trail of 1099, and thence southwards to Beirut, Sidon and the Ladder of the Tyre, which was the northern border of my own territory.

I already knew most of the castles in the north of Palestine, crumbling fortresses, most of them, inhabited by Arabs and Druze mountaineers whose little houses huddle among the shattered curtain walls of strongholds like Montfort, the fortress of the Teutonic military monks, Kaukab-el-Howa, "Star of the Winds", high above the Sea of Galilee, Castle Pilgrim at Athlit, the mounds of Arsuf, the shell-torn curtains of Mirabel at Antipatris, Belvoir-above-the-Jordan, and, my favourite one of all, Mount Tabor, where the Franciscan friars have a hospice in the coolness and greenery of the summit, far above the sweltering, malarial Plain of Armageddon, hidden among the walls of the Abbey-fortress of old.

I had accumulated a library small enough to fit in my regulation box. It consisted of Stevenson's *Crusaders in the East*, Archer and Kingsford's *Story of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*; volumes two and eight of *The Times' Historians' History of the World*; a copy of *De Joinville* and *De Villehardouin*, bound in a single volume; a very aged copy of *Gesta Francorum* in its Latin with a Spanish translation. Most precious of all were three very battered books which were rebound for me by a Moroccan Jew of Jaffa, containing *William of Tyre*, *de Vinsauf* and extracts from the diaries of people like *Henry of Huntingdon*, *Richard of Devizes*, *Fulk of Chartres*, *Walter the Chancellor* and a score of others who had been participants in one or other of the many expeditions of the Crusade. Someone in the late eighteenth century had gone to a deal of trouble in translating long sections from all these chroniclers and collecting them in these books. I am sorry that I lost most of them in Crete in 1941, when I was prisoner of war for five days before I decided to leave.

The Bible was the most interesting of my few books, because, starting with the Crusades as a hobby, it was not long before my travels all over Palestine brought me to the sites and shrines for which the Cross-wearers themselves had fought. I was greatly aided in all this by a slim little book, produced for Allenby's armies by a Royal Naval Reserve officer resident in Port Said, who knew his Palestine thoroughly. My final volume was *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*. In time I was to add to them, but these were my foundation.

I repeat, I had come to love Palestine and my work with the Coastguard was all I asked from life. I had all the seafaring I wished as well worthwhile duties. I had scope to use my initiative and a chance to accept responsibility in matters which often meant life or death to my small party and myself. The pay was meagre but sufficient, the social amenities nonexistent, for the newly-arrived wives of the British officials did not recognize the existence of we soldiers-of-fortune, while I had no desire for the sordid and shabby intrigues with native women and not much for those that disappointed wives of British residents occasionally offered to us lusty young men when their middle-aged husbands were safely away on duty.

Another year, I decided, would do me no harm; I could always move on after this later period of enlistment was ended.

Six weeks after I signed-on for my third period of twelve months the blow fell! Orders came to hand over all our stores, weapons and marine craft to the Palestinian section of the Port Police, and for us to return to ordinary military duty with the Gendarmerie. I bitterly regretted signing for that third year as I travelled to Jerusalem, where my company, Number 5, was quartered in rusty Nissen huts on Mount Scopus, which had been abandoned by a pack-battery of the Indian Army many years before as being unfit for human occupation.

Book II

DEAD SEA AND HOLY SEPULCHRE

AS IN THE DAYS OF HATTIN

THE Gendarmerie camp on Mount Scopus was small and very different from what it was in later years, when it became the Headquarters of the British Police and a vast, well-fortified cantonment.

I found conditions in the Gendarmerie were very changed. There were not more than half a dozen of the ex-officers and ex-Royal Irish Constabulary men whom I had known still serving in my company. The rest were the "seven shillings a day" men, mainly young, short-service ex-Guardsmen who had seen no active service during their three years with the Army, while some of the third-year recruits had not even been in any of the Services.

Two weeks of our quasi-military life made me despair of enduring my third term without deserting, but, fortunately, relief came because I was proficient in Arabic. My first chance arrived while I was in command of the main guard at Government House, the palace built for the Kaiser's empress on the crest of the Mount of Olives, or rather, on the southernmost spur of Scopus. Some distinguished guest, who was staying with the High Commissioner, strolled into the garden after dinner that night and, for some reason best known to himself, fell into conversation with me as I sat on the stone mounting-block near the arched main gate.

We talked about Jerusalem and Palestine in general and when I found that he was a keen and knowledgeable student of the Crusade, I told him many stories of them which I had heard among the Arabs. In particular we discussed Norman military architecture and I described Krak-of-the-Knights, Margat and Castle Pilgrim. He must have been interested, for, the next morning, an hour before my guard was due for relief, Monkton the aide-de-camp took me in to see His Excellency the High Commissioner.

Sir Herbert Samuel greeted me very courteously and asked if I had been speaking to his guest the previous evening. When I said that I had, he asked me some very shrewd questions about the Crusading sites I knew, and probed, very gently, my knowledge of the ways of the life of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. After a while he said, with a smile, that it must be nearly time for the changing of the guard and bade me good-bye. A few days later I was ordered to report to Government House as escort to a party of the High Commissioner's guests. When I found that this would take me

away from military duties for ten days I was delighted. We travelled all over Palestine and then went north into Syria. I shifted into plain clothes before we crossed the border and enjoyed Damascus, after which we visited Krak-of-the-Knights, Margat, Sàone and thence on to Antioch, returning down the coast through Tortosa, Tripoli and Beirut to the Dog River and so back to Jerusalem.

I soon had another of these trips as escort and, as I was becoming familiar with the layout of Jerusalem and its neighbourhood, it began to look as though I was fated to become a dragoman for Government House guests. I furiously resented this when some of my comrades threw it in my teeth, and I was extremely glad when I was chosen to be one of an advance party that was to go to Transjordan. We were to prepare a camp in case the worsening situation in the Syrian Desert made it necessary to send the Gendarmerie to fight on the eastern border.

There was no Jewish problem, as the Zionists had no settlements east of Jordan. The Arabs were mainly Bedouin except for the people of the few towns like Amman, Kerak, Irbid, Es Salt and Maan, and even these places were very small. There were a few villages of Christians, like Madaba, but practically the whole population was Muslim.

Bedouins have a predominantly patriarchal organization, the basic unit being the family, which has so many collateral branches, however, that it is closely knit with the clan. These clans, which insist on being self-contained entities, have, through intermarriage and mutual interests in warfare and grazing, gradually become amalgamated loosely into "nations", or confederacies under the rule of Paramount sheikhs. Some of these "nations" are very large (I use "nations" in the same sense employed in American Colonial days to describe the Iroquois and other Redskin groups) and they number a great many exceptionally courageous and hardy fighting men. The Beni Sakhr, the Howeitat, the Ruwalla and several others represented a considerable power in the land which, in so many respects, was politically equivalent to the England of later-feudal times. The Paramount sheikhs of the larger confederacies approximate to Warwick the Kingmaker, Richard of York or the Mortimers and de Bohuns, and played very much the same rôles in Transjordan's affairs as their English counterparts did in our own history.

The resemblance is heightened by the fact that the King, or Emir as he was then entitled, was a foreigner or, rather, an Outlander, for the Bedouin Arab knows no more of political nationalities than did our own ancestors of King Henry I's day. The late King Abdullah was a member of the Royal

House of Hashim, the hereditary rulers of Mecca, his father, King Hussein, having revolted against his Turkish suzerain and taken sides with us. The whole "Lawrence of Arabia" epic was made possible by Sherif Hussein's revolt, so that, when the First War was over, most of the newly won Arab lands were divided among the scions of the Hashimite family.

Hussein himself became King of the Arabs, with Arabia as his kingdom; his son, Feisal, was King of Syria with Damascus as his capital until a typically Crusading intrigue by the French expelled him. As a consolation King Feisal was given Mesopotamia, newly reverted to its ancient name of "Iraq", with Baghdad as his capital and became dependent on Britain which, at that time, held a League of Nations Mandate for the country. I am not proposing to discuss the hotly disputed rights and wrongs of all these matters (none of which cast much credit on either France or Britain), but merely to record what happened to us, the men-at-arms of the Thirty Years' Crusade.

There were troubles with the resurgent and victorious Turkey of Mustapha Kemal el Ghazi over the northern frontiers of the new Iraq. Later, there was a shameful and callous betrayal by Britain of the Assyrians, the oldest Christian people in the world, who had shed their blood so copiously and fought so well for us, relying on our promises that they should be installed as a nation with a land of their own. The Assyrian Chaldeans, who still use, as their vernacular, the Aramaic, which was the tongue of our Lord's Ministry, suffered and died because they acted as our auxiliary troops garrisoning Iraq for us, but their betrayal was kept so quiet that few Britons realize the depth of contempt that we won for ourselves by that exceptionally shabby incident.

Abdullah, a younger son of King Hussein, was given the land east of the River Jordan, the territories of the ancient Moabites, Ammonites and Nabataeans, as his quasi-independent principality. Transjordan is the one exception to our tale of ineptitude in Arab lands. We have succeeded there, to a far greater extent than elsewhere, because we had some of the very best men in all the Empire acting as our representatives at the court of the Emir. Such stalwarts as Peake, Glubb, the two Kirkbrides, Cox and Foot have, with a few others, played a noble part, in startling contrast to the generality of British officials west of the Sacred River.

But the very fact of the Emir, whom we imposed on the tribes and towns of Transjordan, being an Outlander made matters precarious at first. There have been countless intrigues and risings which had to be met with inadequate forces, so that a policy of "divide and rule" was intelligently employed

until a new generation arose who had no memory of Ottoman Turkish days. When I first went east of the Jordan the Paramount sheikhs still enjoyed great power and were almost absolute rulers within their own areas. Another great danger was the ancient feud between the Saudian House of the Princes of Nejd and the Hashimites of Mecca, which had reached a climax, for, at that time, the great Arab prince, Abdul Aziz Ibn Saoud, who has since proved himself among the most enlightened and unselfish of monarchs, was confined to his own territory in the Nejd, the interior of Arabia.

There is no man in modern times who has lived a more adventurous and hazardous life than he; his story reads like that of some mediaeval monarch of the days of the Crusades. His Majesty King Ibn Saoud has endured all the vicissitudes of war and fortune that befell Bohemund or Richard Lion-heart. As a young man he led a forlorn hope of stormers across the ramparts of his capital city; like Baldwin the First he has been a homeless wanderer with only a few followers and, also like that Crusading King of Jerusalem, has won great power and place through his own courage and infinite resource.

King Ibn Saoud is the head of a great religious movement which was in bitter opposition to the form of Islam practised by the rulers of Mecca. The Wahabite Reform of the Faith is stern and uncompromising, but it appeals to the puritanical spirit of the fighting Bedouin tribesmen. Under King Ibn Saoud it has welded the loose confederation of nomad clans in the Hedjaz into an obedient and extremely courageous whole, somewhat on the lines of an extremely efficient and hardy Cromwellian New Model.

At the time of which I am writing, however, King Ibn Saoud had only newly emerged from the fastnesses of his native Nejd and was attacking the kingdom of the Hedjaz in which Britain had enthroned the Emir's father, King Hussein. The Wahabites were swiftly driving the Hashimites out of Arabia; the stern sectaries were not only victorious at almost every point, but the former subjects of Hussein were accepting the invaders with alacrity and embracing their rugged Reformed religion.

The main danger was that a Wahabite expeditionary force might thrust into Transjordan to expel our protégé, the Hashimite Emir. But we moved no Imperial troops into Transjordan, although a few British gendarmes were sent to prepare accommodation in case our Force, being a purely Colonial one and not an Imperial regiment whose presence might have provoked League of Nations comment, had to be employed. The Arab Legion, then a far smaller Force than it is nowadays, was told to do all it could and not ask for reinforcement if it could avoid doing so. There was a squadron of R.A.F., stationed in Ramleh, near Jaffa, with a few obsolescent

armoured-cars, which was moved to Amman in case their use became imperative. That was all our striking-force.

Fortunately, we had Peake in command of the Arab Legion, Peake Pasha, as he is widely known, and he worked wonders. It must be remembered that the Legion was in its infancy and that there was always a risk that its troopers, who were mainly tribesmen, might be swayed more by loyalty to their individual Paramount-sheikhs than by their oath to serve the Outlander prince whom Britain had imposed on them. The Arab Legion was not mechanized then, it consisted of a few squadrons of cavalry and camelry, together with a mixed battery of four guns, two of them lost by the Honourable Artillery Company during the abortive Es Salt Raid in 1918. Another was an ex-Turkish piece; the fourth, of different calibre, had been abandoned by a German battery serving under General Liman von Sanders. There is a good tale, it may be apocryphal, which says that the sabres of the Legion were donated by a Cairo museum after they had lain disregarded in its cellars ever since Napoleon's cavalry lost them a century and a quarter before. The only asset possessed by the Emir's Legion was the indomitable personality of Peake Pasha moulding the inherent courage of his Bedouins.

We faced a situation and a problem very similar to those experienced by the Crusading kings; the princes of Islam were fighting between themselves and in their warfare anything might happen to the weak and under-garrisoned coastal strip ruled under the Red Cross of St. George. If a Wahabite army swept into Amman, the next dawn might find it ravaging round the walls of Jerusalem, while the evening of the same day could see the few survivors of the British Mandate making their last stand on the beaches of the Mediterranean.

The emergency sprang on us so suddenly that there was no time to do more than to hold the threatened breach as best we could.

We had time only to dash out to a valley about fifteen miles from Amman the capital, and to dig-in, before the fanatical flood of hardy desert riders broke against us on their surge towards the destruction of the Hashimite principality. We numbered about 400 Arab Legionaries under Peake Pasha, two R.A.F. armoured-cars and the small advance party of about a dozen British Gendarmerie. We counted thirteen banners waving above the heads of the Arab cavalry and reckoned that there were close on five to six thousand riders, all well armed and superbly mounted, facing us.

We had strung a thin fence of barbed wire across the narrow valley, which was about 400 yards wide from rock to rock, and 100 yards behind it we dug a shallow trench and erected a second fence, both of

them very flimsy, for we had to be economical with our scanty wire. The enemy came at us in the fashion of the riders of Saladin and of Bibars the Mameluke, banners waving, swords brandished in the air, lance-heads glittering, mantles aswirl and head-cloths streaming wildly in the wind of their own headlong passage. Shrill voices screamed "*Allah-hu-Akbar!*", the age-old battle-shout of Islam; every rider in the horde desperate to come to handstrokes with the pitifully small line of heretics and foreign infidels who faced them.

They struck our further wire like a wave of the ocean hitting the rocks of the foreshore. Scores went down, horses kicking, men struggling madly to free themselves, only to be ridden over by their roaring comrades in the rear, who used them as a ramp to carry them over the apron-fence and on to our parapet. Rifles, and our heterogeneous selection of machine-guns, about ten or a dozen of them, did not stop them, though they went down in swathes, but the second wire fence did, where we of the Gendarmerie pelted the shrieking, writhing mass with hand-grenades. Two small causeways, left to span the trench, allowed the old Rolls-Royce armoured-cars to go through and join in the fray.

I saw men clad in the mail hauberks their ancestors may have used at the Horns of Hattin, or at the Mameluke's intaking of Antioch, swinging swords as they tried to reach the Legionaries in the trench. Only a few of the Wahabites troubled to use the rifles they all wore slung on their shoulders. A handful who fought their way over the bodies of comrades blanketing our wire, died on the bayonets, or beneath the swinging sabres of the Legion. It was more than human flesh could stand. Suddenly they broke, streaming away down the valley in full rout.

It was over too quickly for me to feel very much during the hectic moments of the actual fighting, but I did realize that the Lord God had been very good to me in allowing me to bear a hand in the same kind of warfare as that which our ancestors had shared when they ringed their shield-wall round the crest of the Mount of Beatitudes of Hattin, to face the horsemen and archers of Saladin charging through the acrid smoke of the smouldering herbiage.

I found two mail hauberks on the battlefield, one of them was of Crusading chainwork, the other made of the fine Damascene rings the Saracens once wore. I also found a sword, whose blade was new but whose cross-hilt bore the mark of two knights astride a single horse, the badge of the Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of the Lord, the Knights Templar. I took away a most noble battle-axe of Frankish origin.

After our victory the Gendarmerie were not needed in Transjordan and I returned to Jerusalem with the others, where, to my joy, and because I spoke fairly good Arabic, I was attached to the native Palestine Police, whose headquarters adjoined the ancient Castle of the Pisans, the so-called "Tower of David".

I became the Traffic Officer, as motor transport was increasing and becoming a problem. The trouble was that some of the Palestinian police other-ranks who specialized in this work were extremely venal, and were suspected to operate an organized system of extortion from the public-hire drivers. My grounding in the working of *Faşad* among the Coastguard prevented me from doing anything impetuously foolish, as a Westerner new to such a task, might have done.

I was allowed to retain the best of the Palestine personnel after the irreclaimable ones were transferred to posts where they would not have much close contact with the public. Things began to improve, the accident rate fell and there was more control over out-of-date licences and dangerous driving. In all this I was greatly helped by that wise old gentleman Ragheb Bey el Nashashibi, the Mayor of Jerusalem, who often sat as a magistrate in the Traffic Court.

Naturally, I was offered the usual inducements not to be too inquisitive about how many passengers were carried in public cars and to turn a blind eye on the more flagrant contraventions. Free rides, money, flattery, the allegedly exclusive ministrations of one of the prettier ladies-of-the-town, were all courteously declined until the drivers and their agents gave up all hope of buying my favour, whereupon some of the really bad ones did their utmost to rub me out by carefully staging "accidents". After a couple of these I tackled one of the worst of my would-be assassins. One night I stopped his car and forced him to precede my motor-cycle down a little-used track leading to the rear of the rocky mount beyond the Kolondia air-field, which is the site of the ancient city of Mizpah. There were no witnesses, and although he matched me in physique, he had not the least idea of how to look after himself without the advantage of a dagger or a pistol. As I had removed his shepherd's skinning-knife before we started the argument he was pretty badly damaged by the time we finished.

Without corroborative evidence he was afraid to make an official complaint or to lay a court charge. He did, however, look for a professional false witness, but I let it be known, quietly, what would happen to any aspiring perjurer. As my opponent was greatly feared as a bully my victory created a salutary awe for my prowess. For a couple of weeks or so I was

particularly careful whenever I was on lonely roads, or in Jerusalem streets after dark, but he did not set any bravoes on to me, probably because he knew that if I was found one morning with my blood on the cobbles, the motive would have been so obvious that nothing could have saved him from our very efficient gallows in the Central Prison.

By other, and less drastic methods, we brought the Jerusalem drivers under control. There were probably less than a dozen Jewish-driven taxis or public cars at this time. Tougher even than the "hard-case" drivers were their agents, who ran among the crowds of country-folk forcing them into their clients' cars for the return journey to Bethlehem, Hebron, Abu Goshe, Ramallah, Bir es Zeit or Bireh (which last, by the way, is the traditional place where Joseph and Mary first missed their twelve-year-old Son, Whom they later found instructing the Doctors in the Temple).

Cars were then a novelty in Palestine and there were still a lot of pair-horse victorias—*arabees* as they were called by the Arabs. The rivalry between carriage-drivers and chauffeurs was intense and sometimes bloody. One of the victoria drivers was a colossal, full-blooded negro nicknamed Abu Dufada, "Father of Frogs". Abu Dufada was the terror of the streets; he stood six foot six, with a fifty-four-inch chest and must have weighed close on 280 pounds, which is twenty stone, and he grotesquely resembled a huge frog. By over-indulgence in the white spirit, *arak*, which drives any man fighting-drunk, he had become as ferocious as a gorilla and gloried greatly in the abject fear he inspired.

I enforced some of the regulations regarding the victorias, especially the ones aimed at preventing the worst of the cruelty their wretched horses suffered. The drivers assented grudgingly to these new-fangled rules because they were too cowardly to oppose me, but they were all more than delighted when Abu Dufada announced, in the most public fashion, that he was not going to put up with the tyranny of this dog of a British gendarme any longer.

The "showdown" came very quickly. One hot afternoon at the Damascus Gate Abu Dufada, filled with *arak* and very dangerous, stalked into the small Police post inside the walls and demanded that the native corporal in charge should produce that accursed, infidel son of a castrated pig called Duff. By the way, my surname in Arabic means a little drum Arabs use for dancing. The huge negro announced his intention of playing a tune on this particular little drum that would resound right round Jerusalem. When the corporal indignantly ordered him out of the post, Abu Dufada roared with heartfelt joy and promptly pitched the

worthy N.C.O. and his four Arab constables straight out on to the cobbled street.

I happened to be near the Damascus Gate when the noise beyond the double right-angle of the ancient entrance drew my attention to the Police post, which stood just within. Abu Dufada saw me at once and stood exulting in the doorway, his wide face glistening with sweat, his fists drumming on his barrel of a chest, his eyes crazy for the coming fight. He roared an invitation for me to come inside and to decide, once and for all, which of us was the better man.

In a few seconds a large crowd gathered round the dishevelled policemen in the cobbled street, for there is a lot of traffic through the Damascus Gate. I realized that the time for my proving had come and that I had to deal with this crisis all by myself; I also knew enough of Arab ways of thought to understand that I must act with sufficient panache to make the episode into a good story for the witnesses to tell afterwards. There is nothing that Arabs appreciate more than a direct appeal to their sense of the theatre.

I was conscious of foolish self-dramatization while I played to the grandstand by unbuckling my pistol-belt and handing the weapon, ostentatiously, to my native corporal. Abu Dufada, with a wide grin of pure joy on his shining, black face, every ivory tooth gleaming, was flexing his hands and chanting happily about all he meant to do to the infidel pig of an Englishman. I maintained my pose of outward calm, although I was scared stiff inside, and bade him wait just a moment as I had no wish to allow him any chance to say, after I had beaten him, that I was an armed man while he had no weapons. I announced in my best Arabic that what I was going to do to him would be final and lasting.

Of course it was all very silly and it was against all rules and regulations; we resembled a couple of game-cocks sparring for an opening. I was scared right down to my marrow but I was even more afraid that the bystanders would suspect how frightened I really was. Abu Dufada looked huge; although I am six foot, and fairly burly, he overreached and overtopped me and had the advantage of, maybe, fifty pounds. He was too tall to stand upright in the doorway of the Police post and so was crouching just inside, crooning his invitation in a "Dilly, Dilly, come and be killed" style.

As I advanced, hoping to get in a swift uppercut, although I was quite prepared to use my boots (for I do not believe in hampering myself with any false ideas of keeping to Queensberry rules when fighting a blood-lusting barbarian who certainly would not reciprocate), Abu Dufada stepped back into the little square room, congested even further by a regulation desk and

three chairs. I saw his plan at once; he had no idea of boxing, he wanted to get me inside where there would be no space for manoeuvre, and then to crush me in his huge arms. Maiming or, more likely, death would follow very quickly if I once tangled with him.

The Palestinian constables were far too scared to take a hand; they plainly showed that they considered discretion by far the best part of valour and stood away as goggle-eyed as any of the ever-increasing mob of spectators. It is a cold feeling to face a humiliating death with a ring of callous, excited faces surrounding you and offering no aid.

As I stepped into the doorway Abu Dufada came at me with a roar, both his great hands grabbing for my throat. There was no personal hatred in the madman's heart, nothing but a superlative joy of joining battle with a foreign infidel. I side-stepped and crashed home a left to his heart, and just missed the point of his jaw with a right uppercut. My blow to his body made him grunt a little for he was not in hard condition and shook him enough to make him swerve and stumble out through the doorway. He wheeled instantly and with a shrill scream of simian rage came back with his huge paws beating a gorilla-like tattoo on his mighty chest.

It was quite hopeless to try to box him. His head was far too rock-like, the space much too small. There was a large, brown, stone bottle of Stephen's ink, which held a quart or so, on the desk, and I grabbed it as Abu Dufada came roaring into the post. I side-stepped, sank my left hand up to the wrist in his soft belly, bringing his head down in his sudden agony, so that he lurched forward, hands flung forward to recover his balance against the further wall. That gave me my chance and I smashed the stone bottle down on to the dome of his skull, his own motion adding to the fierce force of the blow.

The result was surprising for, in the split second before the black fluid spread, I saw the crisp hair and ebony skin of his crown split open and fall back, plainly exposing the ivory-white bone of his skull. Then he was drenched in a flood of blood and ink and went straight down, falling almost without a twitch, his feet protruding into the street, his huge inert black body in full sight of the awestruck crowd. There was not a sound from Abu Dufada, who looked like a fallen tree, and, for a few seconds, the mob were mute before their shrill tongues took charge.

The outcome was very satisfactory. Instead of prosecuting, we enlisted Abu Dufada in the municipal police, a body of unarmed constabulary belonging to the City of Jerusalem, where they acted as night-watchmen in the covered bazaars and *souqs*. We advanced the "Father of Frogs" to the

rank of corporal and, during the years I served in the Holy City, my firmest friend and staunchest comrade was the ex-carriage-driver with the big scar on his black head. He, with another negro whom I enlisted under similar circumstance in the Tomb of Our Lady at Gethsemane one Assumption-tide, were my staunchest friends.

Organizing the traffic was simple, for even the toughest of the touts became very respectful after Abu Dufada's fall, while his conversion into a firm friend brought all his old gang to my service if I needed them. To play back at my foes the game of *Faşad*, I used that gang as a threat which was more than effective.

CHAPTER II

DEAD SEA PATROL

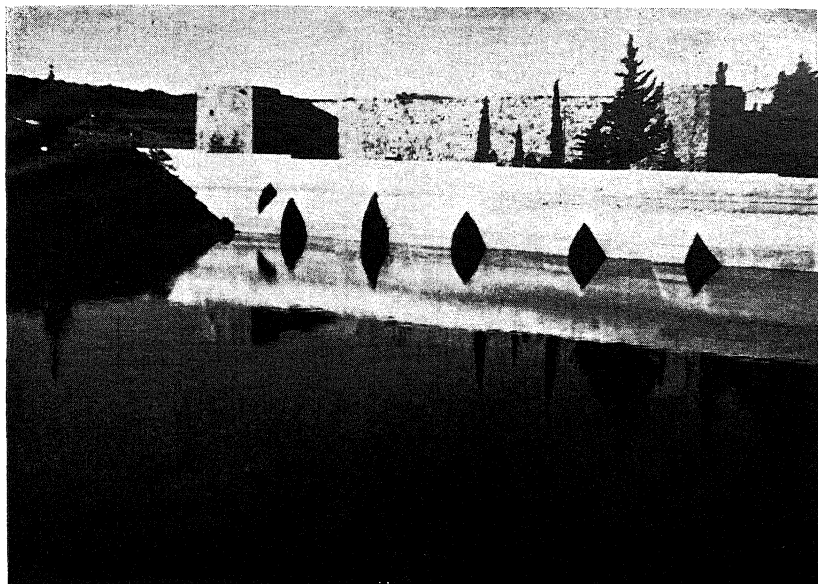
NOW and again I was ordered to report to Government House on the Mount of Olives to act as an unpaid dragoman. After some initial unpleasantness about tips we usually got on extremely well. Occasionally things were awkward; a few idle women over the fortyish line, with little to occupy their minds, appeared to think that any young man in a khaki tunic might be so dazzled by the society of "his betters" that he would be eager to pander to people of their status, but I usually avoided offending their innate femininity.

I also met situations where, imagining that I was playing Joseph to Potiphar's wife, I was shocked to find that Potiphar was only too anxious to be cuckolded in order to win his matrimonial liberty. An obscure British gendarme would, apparently, have been an ideal co-respondent in the divorce court at home.

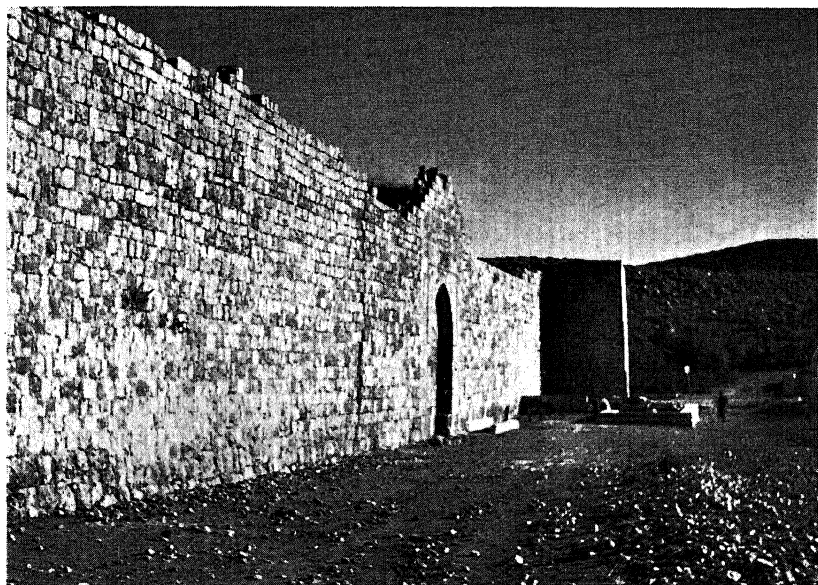
In the course of a public career I have met many ladies who played the rôle of the scriptural Egyptian noblewoman but I have usually evaded them by inviting them to execute their threats. To a bachelor, who did not care in the least whether he remained in Palestine or was dismissed, they were merely beating the air. Similar situations happen, often, to young officers of all countries and in every service.

Events were marching swiftly in the Arab lands around us. The Wahabites had driven King Ali (in whose favour his father, King Hussein, had abdicated, before fleeing with a vast treasure in gold coin for Cyprus) into Jeddah, the last foothold of the Hashimites in Arabia.

I will not enter into the highly controversial matter of the MacMahon promises to King Hussein, by which he had been promised the rule of all the Arab lands in return for his support against the Turks. Neither shall I venture to discuss the rights and wrongs of the Balfour Declaration by which the Jews were assured a national home in Palestine. Square miles of paper and barrels of ink have been expended on both these matters to prove whatever the writer of the moment chose to believe to be the truth. It is a shabby, and very shoddy, page in British history, one which it is difficult to excuse even on the grounds of military expediency, always an amoral



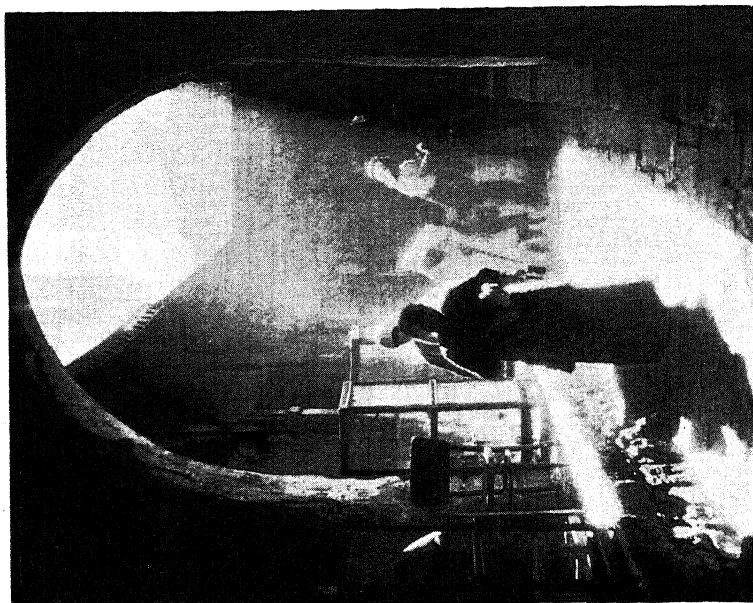
Solomon's Pools and Castle, near Bethlehem



Urtas Castle curtain-wall, near Bethlehem



The Jaffa Gate, Jerusalem. Now the frontier between Israel and the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan



A street in the old city, Jerusalem

defence; all that concerns me is to describe the effects it had on us, the men who were charged with the holding of public peace in the Holy Land.

New forces, too, were rising; among them the ambitions of the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin el Husseini, a person for whom, privately and entirely apart from his politics, I have always had great admiration. Young, handsome and a true leader of men, with a vast personal courage, Haj Amin was among the more picturesque and romantic figures of our modern days. Certainly he is hard, steel hard, in the pursuit of his aims, and, by Western ideas, he is both unscrupulous and treacherous, but it must also be recalled that he is a Jerusalemite, reared under the guidance of Ottoman Imperial Turkey. He has the morals, the principles and the convictions of our mediaeval forefathers; there is very little difference between his zeal for his faith, family and race, than that shewn by the Grand Masters of the Hospital, or the Temple, eight centuries ago.

It is idle to condemn him merely because he has worked against the Mandatory. To Haj Amin, Britain is a foreign, and an infidel, tyrant in whom no reliance could be placed and which he deems unworthy of his loyalty. Though he certainly seeks personal aggrandizement, he does so as a Muslim of Palestine, as a bitter foe of Outlander Muslim from foreign parts, and as an Arab leader who hates a Britain which he believes to be responsible for all that has happened to his native country, from part of which his people have, since, been driven.

Haj Amin el Husseini, in those earlier days of our Mandate, was still outwardly friendly and co-operative towards Britain, and was more concerned with scoring over his hereditary foes, the equally princely and ancient House of Nashashibi, than he was with any wider issues. The division between these two Houses has for many generations split the people of Palestine into two camps. Montagues and Capulets, or York and Lancaster, did not hate each other any more than do Husseini and Nashashibi. In every village one clan clove to the Husseinis, the other was loyal to the Nashashibis. Even powerful families of Jerusalem nobles, such as the Khaldis and the Dajanis, supported one House or the other. Murders, tree-cutting, vine-uprooting, the burning of crops and olive trees in the villages, all most heinous crimes in a land dependent on these things, were carried out in the name of the great feud, although they were usually more directly connected with private quarrels, whose leaders employed the Nashashibi-Husseini dispute as a pretext to win wider support for their own vendettas. Widespread *Fasqad*, aided for decades by the central feud, was the curse of Arab Palestine.

The British Government made an ill-judged attempt to balance the power by placing Ragheb Bey el Nashashibi, a great gentleman and an extremely cultured man, who had been a member of the Turkish parliament, as Mayor of Jerusalem, while installing Haj Amin in the dignity of Mufti of the Holy City, with the same official precedence as a Christian Patriarch or a Chief Rabbi. Both noblemen were thus given power, the disposal of big funds, and a large bestowal of patronage.

With the fall of the House of Hashim, the Emir Abdullah's influence west of the Jordan suffered a temporary eclipse, especially when it became obvious that the British Government had no intention of replacing his father, King Hussein, on the throne of Mecca. It was about this time that the people of Palestine began to talk of themselves as "Arabs", a name they had always despised as one denoting landless men of no account. For this change the Mufti was mainly responsible. He changed the conventional appeal, directed to his people as Muslim unconscious of race or nationality, and began to spread the idea of their being Arabs, who could claim the glory of being of the same race as the great new Master of Arabia, who had expelled the puppets of European interests.

The influx of Jewish immigrants, too, was commencing to alarm the country-folks. A great deal of Jewish building was going on outside the walls of Jerusalem; Tel Aviv was almost a town on Muslim Jaffa's northern border, and new farms and Jewish agricultural colonies were springing up all over the Plains of Sharon and Armageddon. There had been trouble in Jaffa and Jerusalem in 1921, but it had been strictly localized and had never affected the country as a whole, but the sight of the Jewish settlements and the increasing number of immigrants was beginning to frighten the simple farmers. It was fertile ground for Haj Amin's concept of their being Arabs, in addition to being Muslim, to take firm root.

The fact that the Jews paid far more for the land than it was worth meant nothing to the ordinary people of the villages, for, in almost all cases of the sale of the land around them, the purchase price went to absentee landlords, the descendants of Egyptian and other conquerors who had overrun Palestine in the first half of last century under Mohammed Ali the Great and Ibrahim Pasha.

The land bought by the Jews in the earlier period was often extremely malarious, or sterile, because it had not been cultivated since the ancient irrigation channels and drains perished, centuries before, under the dead hand of the Muslim. Nevertheless, the presence of these newcomers, who were extremely foreign in their clothes, ways of life and thought, to the

Palestinians was already causing a vast disquiet among the villagers near whose homes the Jews settled. It was this basic fear which Haj Amin exploited with his doctrine of their being "Arabs".

Just before Sir Herbert Samuel completed his term of office I had to look after the traffic arrangements when Lord Balfour laid the foundation stone of the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus. It was then a small country-house which, before 1914, had belonged to Sir John Gray Hill and had later become our Police Training School. It was a memorable day, with Jerusalem laid out like a map to one side of the windy ridge, and all the Wilderness of Judah stretching away to the distant Mountains of Moab, with the thin green ribbon of the herbiage on the side of Jordan, and the almost sapphire of the Dead Sea lying between.

I was sent to Jaffa to help in the arrangements for Sir Herbert's departure. The first problem we met was that, in all the Holy Land of Palestine, we had no field-gun to fire the salute to which the departing High Commissioner was entitled.

We resolved it by borrowing an ancient Turkish field-piece from the Jaffa Municipality, one used for firing the sound signals for the breaking and resumption of the Fast during the month of Ramadan. I sat up all night with a British inspector, filling old cartridges-cases with black powder and fitting detonators so that we could use them in the morning.

We did almost as well as the battery at the Tower of London and fired the salute for Sir Herbert Samuel and his family as they joined the Italian mail-packet which took them away. I was the last person on the shores of Palestine to shake hands with the great man who had done all that lay in him (and his powers are far beyond those of ordinary mortals) to make the Holy Land a fit place for decent-minded humans.

I was very fond of the Dead Sea before it became part of a gigantic factory system. With the rise of evaporating-pans and chemical works near the old Dead Sea post, the laying out of the "Sodom and Gomorrah Golf Links" and the building of a luxury hotel, most of the magic has disappeared. When I first knew the Great Lake there were only a few desiccated and tumbledown huts standing on the grey shingle of the beaches, with a rotting jetty a few feet long; all that remained of the Ottoman Turkish grain port and the small Royal Naval station of Allenby's day. There were two or three lighters, survivors of a mouldering Turkish flotilla destroyed at the south end of the Dead Sea, where the famous battle between Lawrence's cavalry and enemy ships occurred.

The weird sheet of water, 500 square miles in area, fascinated me so

much that, on my first leave after quitting the Coastguard, I persuaded my old friends, Taffy and Jock and a character named "Dinty", to fit-out the only lighter that possessed a suit of sails, and in her we explored the shores for three weeks.

The Dead Sea lies between mountain walls on east and west, with the Ghor es Safi, the continuation of the Great Rift of the Jordan Valley, reaching to the Arabian Gulf of the Red Sea at Akaba to the south. North of it lies the Plain of Jordan, with Jericho and the green oases of the two Greek monasteries of Hajla and Ain Djuk. On the eastern side are many places of great and absorbing interest, such as Callirohae, where Herod the Great was bathing in the hot springs when the unfortunate rumour of his death arose. Further south the great hammer-headed peninsula of the Lissan juts from the eastern shore, which has some sulphur hot pools at the foot of the pass leading up to Kerak of Moab. At the southern end is the valley of rotten limestone near the Mountains of Sodom. Running along the west coast is the Roman road with the cliffs of Masada towering above it.

Masada is a strange, silent and most awesome place. Much of Herod the Great's fortress on the summit still remains, as does the ramp which the legions made to fill the chasm between it and the main range of the Wilderness of Judah, while they were rooting out the gallant Sicarii from the last rallying-point of Jewish freedom. The Roman wall of circumvallation, still almost complete, circles the base of Masada. In the long centuries since Titus Caesar's day scarcely a stone in the dry walls has been displaced, for few people ever passed this way before the chemical riches of the lake were commercially exploited. I had read my Josephus very carefully and, after visiting the Caste of Maccaraeus, on the eastern shore where St. John the Baptist lost his head, we climbed the "Serpent", the path which the ancient historian describes as giving access to the Castle of Masada. We found that he was accurate in his description.

The Roman road passes the waterfall of Engeddi, where King Solomon had vineyards, and is also the site of Sir Walter Scott's hermitage in *The Talisman*, and thence goes northwards to the hills of Nebi Musa and Jericho. During those three weeks in our cranky sailing-vessel, whose sails and cordage were rotten through too many years of close contact with the bitter waters of the Dead Sea, I learned a lot about the lake and the great winds which tear down it after sunset.

One afternoon, months later, an R.A.F. plane reported that a large war-party of Bedouin were moving north along the Roman road, a few miles south of Masada. It was too late to send a mounted patrol to meet the armed

threat in time to check it as there were no roads except the one running through Bethlehem to Hebron and Beersheba. At least twelve hours would be needed to send mounted Palestinian police through the dry hills and deep gorges of the Wilderness of Judah to the Dead Sea. Even longer was necessary to dispatch Gendarmerie by motor trucks to the nearest point from which they could make their way on foot to any possible ambush site.

In the emergency it was decided to man the lighters at the Dead Sea post and I was given charge of the marine part of the expedition. The mounted police from Jericho were told to ride at once for the Dead Sea Post, while we raced down from Jerusalem in two hired civilian trucks carrying baled hay for the horses and what cordage, planks, nails and tools we could find at such short notice. We also had four *fantazis*, water-tanks designed to be slung, two on each side, of a baggage camel.

It was falling dark when we reached the Dead Sea Post with a couple of native officers and a dozen foot police, and found the Jericho mounted men awaiting us. We began to embark the horses, as we should need them to pursue the enemy once we had broken the gang.

The lighters were rotten, but the Greek Christian concessionary, who used the craft for hauling rock salt from the Mountain of Sodom to the post for transport thence to Bethlehem, his home, gave us all the help he could. Ibrahim, the concessionary, was a tall, handsome man of about sixty who had been the victim of a terrible outrage when his big house in the olive groves outside Bethlehem was burgled. The old man was tied into a chair and forced to witness the raping of his wife and daughter, and the burning out of another relative's eyes with a red-hot iron, as inducements to make him disclose the hiding-place of his valuables.

The desperadoes would have murdered the whole family and burned down the house if a patrol of mounted police had not appeared at this point, shot down some of the criminals and captured the rest.

Our danger was, of course, that the Bedouins would strike west and so get astride of the main road in order to carry out brigandage on a big scale, or else to attack some of the larger villages in the hills. There was still a trade in slave-girls in those days, and young women from the hill villages commanded a fair price for their good cooking and their docile domesticity.

As soon as the sun sank beneath the long ridge of the Judean mountains the north wind started to blow down the Jordan Valley, which is the lowest place on the face of the earth.

All the gear, both timber and cordage, was rotten and brittle from the effects of lying derelict for years in the former Royal Naval store, exposed to

the peculiar chemical properties of Dead Sea water. The concessionary's mechanic worked hard on the engine of their launch while we, toiling under incredibly difficult conditions, embarked the scared troop-horse into two of the lighters, along with supplies of fodder and water. At about ten o'clock, a couple of hours later than we had anticipated, all was ready, and we pushed the lighters out into deeper water. They were small craft of about five tons displacement in normal sea water and "sharp at both ends". The motor-launch possessed a small mast; its engine was covered by a sun-rotted awning; it owned a large cockpit aft, which was about twenty-five feet long.

The night wind was roaring down the Jordan Valley with all its usual force as we drew away from a weather-shore, and the seas became steeper and heavier with every yard we covered. We had some difficulty in resecur-ing the second lighter after its towing hawser parted, but we eventually did so and proceeded on our way. For the next hour or so all went well. With that wind right astern we rode the short steep seas and began to see the dark and towering shape of Point Costigan, which is the headland above Engeddi, looming against the stars on our starboard bow. The seas were running six feet high but, with the wind dead aft, we were comfortable except for sea-sickness among the wretched Arab police troopers, who had got past caring what happened to them; even the horses in the pitching, reeling lighters were too benumbed with misery to be restless.

Our plan was to beach just south of Engeddi and there set an ambush across the Roman road where it runs through a shallow defile close to the shore at the foot of the cliffs. We reckoned that, if we were in position before dawn, we could deal effectively with the numerically superior Bedouin raiding-party, and that our mounted men, working down from Bethlehem, Hebron and Beersheba on its flanks, could turn their retreat into a full rout.

The whole crux of our plan was that we must surprise the raiders completely when we sprang our ambush. But, effectively to defeat them, we had to win ashore without our presence being suspected.

The spluttering, uneven coughing of our asthmatical engine suddenly ended and the speed of the boat died as the lighters astern dragged her to a standstill, broadside-on in the trough. The launch rolled madly with everything breaking adrift from its rotten lashings. The police troopers, sure that their end was on them, called on Allah and his Prophet. They were brave enough men in their own element, but, in the darkness and confusion of a heavy sea and a roaring wind, a couple of miles offshore, they were too bewildered to help themselves. The Arab officer, Izhak Effendi el Assali, fell

overboard. But there was no fear of his being drowned; he could not have submerged in Dead Sea water if he had tried. The metal water-tanks, the camel-back *fantazis*, carried away their lashings and followed the officer over the side. The lighters surged up on the crests of the following waves and descended in a swooping charge at our counter and broadsides.

The old launch was far too decrepit to stand the hammer-blows of the heavy water, which has twenty-four per cent of solids suspended in it. She felt as though she was pounding on a sand-bank, although in fact there was over 1000 feet of water beneath our keel. We got the Arab troopers to ply a long oar, which brought the launch heading into the wind until we were able to make a sea-anchor of bottom-boards that brought her bows round to ride the waves with the lighters safely towing astern.

The motion was frightful and I was afraid that the crazy craft might fall to pieces, but the troopers quickly recovered their courage when they found that something constructive was being done. We lashed a long boat-hook across the stump of the mast and, because most of the cordage was so rotten, guyed and stayed it with wire cut from the hay bales. Three blankets, tacked together with a little more wire, made a sail; we had sufficient staunch cordage to secure our improvised yard, which we reinforced with the last of the baling-wire and rigged with sheets and braces of the same material.

We took nearly three-quarters of an hour to get under way again; time was becoming desperately short if we were to get our men ashore and in ambush posts before dawn. The sail held staunch as, with the help of the oar, we weared, turned her round, stern to wind, after recovering our sea-anchor. With the wind dead aft the launch gathered steerage-way, although the plucking and banging of the towing hawser often all but stopped her. Long before this, I must add, we had hauled the unfortunate Izhak Effendi inboard, though our fresh water was all lost.

My difficulty was to steer sufficiently to the westward to make a landfall at Engeddi, which meant bringing the wind about three points on my star-board quarter. I found, with the wild motion of the launch and the drag of the lighters which were yawning badly with the lessened speed and the heavy sea, that it was impossible to lie anywhere near the course we needed. I dared not give the order to cut the lighters adrift as I was afraid it would cause a mutiny and I had learned the vital lesson, many years before, never to give any order that is not likely to be obeyed. I was extremely glad, therefore, when the aftermost lighter suddenly broke her hawser and drifted away in the night; even my own troopers realized that, under sail alone, and in our conditions, there was nothing I could do to recover it.

With that relief we began to make some real progress, although I would have liked to cut the remaining craft adrift, for time was growing very short. We managed unexpectedly well, however, and with the sea beginning to subside at the approach of dawn, which was killing the wind, we made better progress despite the drag of the horse-filled lighter astern. By great good luck we firmly beached right beneath Engeddi, just as the sky above the Mountains of Moab began to grow pale. Dawn comes quickly in Palestine's latitude, so that we had to move very fast.

The bottom seemed fairly hard when I sounded with an oar and I jumped into four feet of water. My feet went straight through the hard crust of mud and a huge, and most evil-smelling bubble of gas rushed up my body and burst under my chin. It was one of the vilest stenchs I have ever smelled, and I include in that collection Halafaya Pass above Sollum two days after the Italians retreated before Wavell's army of the Nile, and, for good measure, that part of the perimeter of Tobruk where the unburied dead lay thickest.

I struggled ashore rousing fresh gas-bubbles all the way, while, relieved of my weight forward, the launch came a few feet further towards the dry land. With great labour we got the men and horses ashore and were moving forward to lay our ambush as the sun was only just beneath the horizon, when heavy firing broke out with terrifying suddenness. A young native officer sharing the cover of the same big boulder on the water's edge suddenly held up his right hand and I saw his middle finger pouring blood.

"There you are," he shouted, and there was more triumph than pain in his voice. "That proves they really *are* trying to kill us, just like I said."

"Do you think they're trying to stroke your pretty poll?" I replied, trying to find a target on the steeply rising ground in front of us, the outer side of the cutting above which we had hoped to lay our ambush. In the grey light of the dawn I could see the red flashes of rifle-fire, while the tall cliffs of Engeddi echoed and re-echoed with the thunder of the musketry. Beside and behind us, the flat calm surface of the Dead Sea was pitted with bullet fountains; other shots were screaming off the boulders and the flat shingle of the beach in whining ricochets.

It lasted only a couple of minutes, for Izhak Effendi, who was now in charge as I had landed my party and so had no further authority, brought the Lewis-gun into action. Three dead attackers came rolling down the hill, whereupon the rest broke off the action, appreciating that other parties of mounted police must be moving down through the Wilderness of Judah to cut off their retreat to the Ghor es Safi, round the south end of the lake past the Mountain of Sodom,

CRUSADER'S SADDLE

I FIRST met Field Marshal Lord Plumer, our new High Commissioner, a few days after his arrival. I had come out of Herod's Gate after visiting my friends, the French monks who have charge of that beautiful Crusading relic the Church of Saint Anne and, as I stepped on to the dusty Jericho road where it starts to run through the dry moat (which protects the city wall from this gate all the way to the Tower of the Storks) a small figure in a blue serge suit, and wearing a bowler-hat, came trudging up the road towards me from the direction of Gethsemane, carrying a rolled umbrella. I squared myself up as I recognized the famous white walrus moustache and the monocle dangling at the end of its black cord; Lord Plumer was coming towards me! Even his most fervent admirers, and I am among the most ardent, could never say that the justly famous Field Marshal was an imposing figure of a man. In sober fact, with his receding chin, ruddy complexion, bushy moustache and monocle, he resembled an American cartoon of a British general, and he was by no means tall. Some distance behind him was an Arab, a plain-clothes sergeant, Yussef Ahmet Nur, who was looking extremely furtive.

I was ready to give a soldierly salute but, before I could do so, a commanding furred umbrella was raised, and screwing his monocle into his eye as he did so, Lord Plumer halted and barked, "Who are you?"

I told him that I was attached to the native Palestinian police, but I did not mention that part of my duty was to organize the protection of the person of His Excellency the High Commissioner.

"That man," the famous soldier said crisply, using his rolled umbrella like a sword as he pointed at poor Sergeant Yussef Ahmet Nur, who had halted thirty yards astern in deep embarrassment and uncertainty as to what he should do, for his orders forbade him to allow the High Commissioner to suspect that he might be followed by a plain-clothes escort, "has followed me from Government House, keeping pace with me down the lane and all the way up this hill from Gethsemane. Who is he? I hope you have not had the impertinence to disregard my orders that I am not to be trailed around like a criminal? Eh?" and he looked supremely fierce, his monocle dropping on to his chest.

I shook inwardly. If he guessed the truth he would raise such a storm with the District Commandant that I might easily find myself returned to general duties with my company on Mount Scopus. I managed to keep a wooden face and reply that it was probably some well-affected Arab who had heard so much about the new *Mandoob es Sami* that, consumed by loyal curiosity, he was not aware that he was, unwittingly, being a nuisance.

"What is *Mandoob es Sami*?" Lord Plumer inquired sharply, restoring his monocle.

"It is the Arabic name for High Commissioner, my lord," I replied. "It means, literally, the High-One-who-has-been-sent."

"Hum!" and there was an ominous pause. "Do you speak Arabic?"

"Well enough to work with native police, sir," I replied.

"That is better. I do not like being 'my-lorded' by men in uniform," he snapped. "Do many of the British Gendarmerie speak Arabic?"

"A few, sir." I remained rigid, wondering where this conversation might lead and thinking what a delightful incongruity an English blue-serge suit, bowler-hat and a rolled umbrella offered to the ancient battlements above us and the historic road on which we stood.

"Hum!" He cleared his throat as his monocle dropped from his eye once more. "Please get rid of that fellow at once! I am glad that you have not had the impertinence to set plain-clothes policemen following me."

He stood and watched while I marched up to the bewildered sergeant and gave him the cursing of his life. But among the sarcastic Arabic I interpolated sufficient to let the keen-witted negro sergeant grasp the situation. He looked very crestfallen, salaamed humbly towards the little old man in the blue-serge suit and hurried away. Lord Plumer said no more but strode off in the direction of the Muslim cemetery on top of Gordon's Calvary, beyond which lay the great pile of the German Hospice of Saint Paul, that we used in those days as our Government Headquarters.

Fifty yards further on he stopped again and beckoned me with his umbrella. I ran forward, halted with a great clicking of boot-heels in a small eddy of white dust and saluted, the sweat streaming down my face, for it was a very hot morning.

"What is this long green mound?" he asked, and I told him that it was believed to be the site of Calvary, and added that I greatly doubted the identification.

He looked at me for a long moment and asked if I was an archæologist. I replied that I was not, but that I was intensely interested in Jerusalem and

Palestine and had tried to get as many books, and as much information, as I could on the subject.

"On what grounds do you say that this mound is not Calvary?" he asked. I gave him a brief résumé of the arguments for the traditional site at the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, and I so warmed to my subject that I lost my awe of this famous little soldier, as well as all count of time. I ended by saying that there was plenty of evidence to prove I was wrong, but the important thing to me was that, for 1700 years, millions of men and women had died with the eyes of their souls turned on that hoary, venerable building whose dome was so close to us, though hidden by the city walls, and I said a few words about the Crusade.

"Are you called Duff?" Lord Plumer asked me suddenly.

Very surprised that he should know my name, I agreed and he nodded his head. "I've heard about you. I was told you are a useful person to take my guests around the country." He looked away. "Good morning," he said, and without another word walked away towards the Government Headquarters.

I met him many times and nearly always with my heart in my mouth. I have seen him, a small, apparently puny, figure, dressed in his Bond Street fashion, being jostled among the crowd in the covered bazaars of Old Jerusalem, often without the company of either of his two excellent A.D.C.s, both good fellows and fit squires for the old knight. Knowing the intrigues, the murderous *fasṣad* and also that some of the most dangerous men in the world walked those bazaars, having secure lairs in Solomon's Quarries, the maze of tunnels that honeycomb the city, I was often very afraid that our indomitable High Commissioner might meet disaster. I need not have worried; the Arab loves a sportsman and, above all else, he adores courage. With their deep and innate courtesy, they grew to love the little soldier who walked through their streets so calmly unafraid. Nevertheless, our anxieties at District Police Headquarters beneath the tower of the Citadel were often intense.

Solomon's Quarries were one of our great problems, for there are scores of secret entrances to this underground labyrinth from the old houses in the Tyropean Valley, where Bab Hutta and El Wad quarters were notorious nests of criminals. Many of our absconded offenders, most of them "wanted" on murder or other serious charges, took refuge in those miles of old-time workings, from which, among other edifices, the stone for Solomon's Temple was cut. One of my amusements on off-duty days, or in the evenings, was to explore as much of them as I could, entering by the usual tourist

entry in the rock face beneath the city walls just east of Damascus Gate and working in a fanwise fashion. As my acquaintance with the great maze grew I wandered further and further afield and was truly amazed with their extent as well as by some of the strange things I found.

There were some places where defences had been built by the Jewish Zealots who "went underground", in the most literal sense, after the sieges by Titus and Hadrian. Loopholes for archery were left in some passages, sited so as to command several yards of an approach gallery. In two tunnels lay little piles of bones where some fugitive, or maybe a pursuing legionary enjoying a "rat-hunt" to enliven the tedium of garrison duty in the tumbled ruins of the Holy City, died so violently and so secretly that his comrades had never given his remains honourable sepulture.

I found exits in the most unlikely places; many into houses of the El Wad quarter. One tunnel emerged in a long-disused shop in the tumble-down bazaar leading to the Cotton Gate of the Temple area, another into a crypt of the Hospitaller ruins. My hobby was making a chart of the galleries I followed, carefully checking their run by compass, but measuring only roughly by keeping as far as possible to the regulation "pace" of a man marching, which is difficult in such surroundings. I twice exchanged shots with unseen assailants in that subterranean honeycomb, but on neither occasion was any blood shed. I began to understand why the Roman legionaries had enjoyed the sport of "rat-hunting"; even the sewers of post-Second War Vienna held no more desperate men than did Solomon's Quarries beneath Jerusalem. They were a secure refuge for the absconded offenders. No Palestinian policemen would risk encountering the ghosts of 3000 years, while British troops or police would so quickly lose touch in the multiplicity of galleries and workings that there was no chance of employing them in any systematic "sweep" of the area.

We had plenty of desperate men hiding in, around and beneath Jerusalem. People of the kidney of those robbers who attacked the Dead Sea concessionary in his villa outside Bethlehem. There was one man, sentenced to life imprisonment for the rape of a British judge's heavily pregnant wife, a crime committed within a few yards of dozens of British officials playing games at the Sports Club, who had shot his way out of the Central Prison and then disappeared. We were extremely anxious to recapture this person, but there was never any trace of him; not even rumours among the opposing clan in his village, who would gladly have betrayed him for the sake of the blood money. He went into hiding in Solomon's Quarries and flourished there for many years, until he became too assured and confident and started

on a new career of crime and so gave us our chance. I had the joy of shooting him through a window of a one-roomed house in Siloam one night as he tried to jump out through a door. As I was using a heavy Colt automatic I saved subsequent waste of time in court and any chance of his repeating his escape.

With the arrival of Lord Plumer there were many and varied alterations in the composition of the armed forces in the Mandatory State, and the Gendarmerie was earmarked for disbandment. One of the reasons for this decision was the yelping of newspapers in Britain demanding retrenchment and strict economy and, as is inevitable in times of apparent peace and security, the armed forces were the first to come under the pruning-knife. Palestine, at that time, had roughly 1,000,000 inhabitants and its annual revenue was approximately £1,000,000. There was only a very small contribution from the Colonial Office, most of which went to pay and keep the British Gendarmerie, although it had already been much reduced in numbers. So-called "experts" of all kinds arrived to turn the Palestine police and its auxiliary branches into a Force on the model of the constabulary in England.

This was all to the good, for the influx of settlers from Europe and the growth of the tourist traffic, which had reached phenomenal proportions, had brought a train of international crooks, especially during the Christmas and Easter rushes. We needed a professional Criminal Investigation Department and efficient contact with the neighbouring police systems. The days when an armed constabulary of military veterans spread over the rural districts was sufficient safeguard were past.

I came to the end of my fourth year of engagement and decided to quit the Holy Land to embark on the next step of the career I had planned, by going to Southern America. I was confirmed in this by the news that the British Gendarmerie was to be disbanded and a small British section of the Palestine Police, themselves to be intensively reorganized on the new model, raised in its place.

Then, all of a sudden, things changed completely. I was offered a permanent commission in the new Palestine Police, to date from the first of the coming April. More, I was told that I should be in command of the reorganized Jerusalem division, comprising the whole of the Old and New cities and the neighbouring Arab villages, a truly honourable post. I blossomed out with a silver-laced black astrakhan *kalpak* on my head, a Sam Browne belt and sword, and stars on the shoulder-straps of my khaki tunic.

My one fear was lifted; I could never be returned to the British

Gendarmerie or British Section to carry on as a soldier. I was delighted, for I now had all the excuse I needed to stay in Palestine. Even if I decided to go to Southern America after a couple of years or so, I could lay claim to a better status by virtue of my commissioned service in the Holy Land.

Life was very different in many ways once I was a permanent official in the Civil Service of the Palestine Government. The British wives in the German Colony became aware of my existence; I was now a man, not merely a cypher in khaki. More particularly still, I was a young bachelor and so consequently of interest to British wives with marriageable sisters, daughters or female cousins.

I already knew something about the Fishing Fleet; I had seen its members at work on European and American visitors in the few hotel lounges and on single British officials when the tourist season ended. Many of the poor dears had had a season or two in London, then gone to India in desperation, failed there, suffered a winter of frustration in Egypt, tried Malta as a last resort for matrimonial material. When the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines both failed to note their desirability as brides, they had come on to spend a final year in Palestine, with all the high-flown ambitions of their first season so wilted that even a humble young officer in an obscure Colonial police force was better than returning to Britain to sink into spinsterhood, with the label "returned empty" tagged to their unwanted charms.

The British official community in Jerusalem did not attract me and, from the first, I had not the least intention of living among it, or of spending my leisure hours at its club. It was the epitome of English colonial "Society" of the type worshipped by the mediocrities who comprised it. It was completely dominated by women; by Englishwomen who were living on a scale of luxury and prestige that few could ever have anticipated in their wildest dreams as girls, one which they had achieved only by marrying nonentities holding senior appointments under the Palestine Government. Consequently, I gladly accepted the invitation of the Franciscan friars to occupy a small suite in their Pilgrim Hospice, the Casa Nova, in the narrow streets of the Old City.

In those days there were very few hotels and none of the great, luxurious buildings which sprang up after 1928. Tourists, most of whom came in large organized parties either as simple holiday-makers or as pilgrims, stayed in one of the great hospices or the few small hotels which had catered for them before 1914. In the Casa Nova I was given a sitting-room with a communicating bedroom and I was entirely happy. I ate in the vaulted refectory where the food was of Italian style and excellent, and there was always a

flask of good wine at one's elbow. My hosts even installed a telephone in my little suite and gave me a key of the steel front door so that I might move freely at night.

I was a very proud man when I assumed my command and took over my office beside the towers of the ancient Citadel. My mind was filled with thoughts of the men who had held my office through all the ages; most of them Outlanders like myself. Except for the few years when the Hebrew kings were the free monarchs of an independent people, Jerusalem had been ruled by Outlanders—Egyptians, Hittites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Macedonians, Romans, Saracens, Crusader Knights and Ottoman Turks—and now I held the responsibility—and the honour which had been theirs.

All of which may sound very jejune and naïvely romantic, but it was natural that I should feel this way, for was I not responsible for all Jerusalem, while my twenty-fifth birthday was still three months and ten days in the future?

GUARDIAN OF THE SHRINES

MY main danger was from some of the British senior officials, who were more intent, whenever trouble occurred, in "clearing their own yardarms", to use the expressive naval phrase, than about anything else. When serious incidents occurred in the Holy Places the Consul-Generals of Latin countries and those of Eastern Europe made strong protests to the High Commissioner's office on behalf of their individual Churches and, if they met no satisfaction, often took their grievances to the Permanent Mandates Commission at Geneva. Nothing frightened many British senior officials more than this procedure, for if His Britannic Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies was forced to apologize before the League, the erring official was likely to be marked for "retrenchment" in the next economy "purge".

If there was any serious trouble in Jerusalem I knew that I should be the ultimate scapegoat. Some seniors would "clear their own yardarms" by saying that "*the unfortunate affair had been caused by the injudicious handling of a delicate situation by a junior police officer, who had acted with undue haste and without consulting his superiors*".

That did not worry me very much, for I was as carefree and as footloose as the Miller of Dee; I had no one dependent on my earnings and, if I was dismissed, I should go to South America and there find employment for my mercenary sword. Had I been a married man with a family I should have been constrained to abase myself into the usual pattern of timidly watching my p's and q's. As things were, I did not care a single damn for anyone and thoroughly enjoyed the innate risks of my new responsibilities.

I saw one way to ease my main difficulties; my own monastic experiences, and my personal observations during the year I had been a British gendarme attached to the Palestine Police, both convinced me that the only way to handle lesser clerics is to become the friend, and apparent confidant, of their superiors. To the honestly fervent religious the voice of his superior is that of God; to the lukewarm and the stone-cold place-seekers, subservience to the heads of their Church is their only way to gain the preferment for which their souls lust. Once the clerics believed that I was high in the good graces

of their superiors, they would be anxious to appear to assist, and might even desist from the shabbiness of conventual intrigues against me.

In the Franciscan friary there were a few English, and English-speaking, friars, notably Fra Godfrey, a Yorkshireman with American nationality, who had spent a lifetime as a friar in the Holy Land after being a wind-jammer sailorman. He was one of the most lovable men I have ever known: in outward appearance he greatly resembled Sir Francis Drake and he possessed a deal of that Elizabethan sailorman's spirit. The fact that I was living in the Casa Nova, which belonged to the Franciscans, also gave me an easier access to them, for they were anxious to be on friendly terms with the officer in charge of the Holy Places.

The Greek Patriarch, the aged and majestic Damianos, who was himself the subject of great controversy and intrigue in his own Synod of the Convent of the Holy Sepulchre (which lives in the vast palace of the Crusading Patriarchs adjoining the Basilica), treated me with great consideration. My approach to him was made through the Archimandrite Kyriakos, Abbot of the Holy Sepulchre, and by way of the very efficient and courteous Arab-Christian, George Said, Secretary of the Patriarchate. I was also friendly with the many Greek Orthodox bishops who held the titular sees which have not been Christian in fact since the Abbasid Caliphs replaced the Ommayyads in Baghdad centuries ago.

These bishops, all members of the Greek Convent, were a gallant crew of elderly men, many possessing the habits of mind of twelfth-century prelates. I got on very well with them and shared many a bottle of excellent wine and good dinners in their palace.

I already loved the Assyrians in their ancient monastery, which they declare to be the house of John Mark where St. Peter dwelt. They are the simplest and the most honest of men, with all the virtues of their great forefathers. They showed me the famous, age-blackened picture of Our Lady which they ascribe to St. Luke, and offered me the best hospitality their poverty could provide. They claim descent from St. James and still speak the same tongue Christ used in His preaching, the Syro-Chaldaic Aramaic which was the vernacular of Palestine in His day.

I treated the Armenian Patriarch with the same deference as I did his two venerable brethren and I was always received with courtesy and hospitality in the great Abbey of St. James, which lies at the back of the Citadel barracks on the narrow way to the Zion Gate. The Armenian Abbot of the Holy Sepulchre was another man whom I greatly liked and esteemed, and he was always hospitable to me during our long hours of duty in the Basilica. His

particular joy was to describe the Armenian principalities of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, and he dearly loved discussing details of the co-operation of his people with the armies of the First Crusade, both before and after the siege of Antioch. Fortunately, I remembered that an Armenian named Bagrat was, for a short period, the confidential adviser of King Baldwin the First who, after the death of the Lady Godvere, took as his wife, the daughter of Taphnuz, an Armenian chieftain.

The Copts were simple to handle, for Egyptians are always ready to be on friendly terms with anyone who firmly holds authority for the moment.

The Ethiopians lived on the roof of the Chapel of St. Helena, occupying the ruins of the abbey of the Augustinian Canons Regular of Crusading days. These dark-skinned monks and priests are simple, happy, innocent, holy men and women, with whom it was a joy to deal after the sordid intrigues of some others.

The Anglican bishopric was not really important so far as I was concerned. St. George's Cathedral is a replica of a medium-sized parish church in an English village, set down on the bare hill-side outside Jerusalem; its congregation was either British officials or Palestinian Christians. The more lovable of this small body of native-Anglicans attended their own church, St. Paul's, a delightful place of great sincerity and spiritual warmth, where one found the beautiful language of Cranmer rendered in a well-chosen Arabic translation, and decent, warm-hearted Anglican clergy of native stock.

I also made friends with the Muslim religious sheikhs of the Temple area, and great gentlemen I found them to be. They approximate to a cathedral Chapter here in the West, although, of course, there is no Ordination or Holy Orders in Islam. Through them I was introduced to Haj Amin, the Mufti, whom I found not only courteous but friendly and more than anxious to help me when I frankly told him my motives in calling socially on his Chapter. At that time Haj Amin was a comparatively young man, tall, handsome, red-bearded and imposing with his spotless black cassock and the snowy turban binding his immaculate scarlet *tarbush*.

Another thing that must be understood is the manner in which the Holy Sepulchre is divided among the several Churches which have rights within it. Every square inch is allocated, by ancient custom, to one Church or other or shared among the whole lot, these latter with strictly controlled times when each may worship. The reasons for, and the details of, this allocation are fascinating in the extreme, for they are connected with all the centuries of Christian history. Each and every little fact of its procedure

and precedence has been the subject of bloodstained negotiations between the Sultan in Constantinople and the monarchs of Christendom. There is no other story in the world which is so filled with base treachery, heroism, abnegation, ruthless selfishness, chicanery and noble altruism all inextricably commingled.

The Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre has been destroyed and rebuilt many times; martyrs have died in the forecourt and blood has flowed in streams all over its hallowed stones since it was first built by Constantine the Great, born at York, to St. Helena, who, according to one tradition, was the daughter of Old King Cole.

A great deal of the Crusading church still remains; you may find fragments of its many rebuildings in most parts of the rambling range of buildings. But I will not enter into any lengthy description of the ancient, holy and fascinating place, for that has been done too often by much abler pens. What I wish to emphasize is that there is only one entrance, the Crusader's door opening into the forecourt; all the rest have been built up.

You enter from the forecourt and have the recess which housed the Turkish guard and the Muslim sheikh on your left as you do so. To your right is the fifteen-foot-high platform of Mount Calvary: immediately in front the Stone of Unction lies like a low bier, while to your left, a few yards away, is the Great Rotunda, with the tiny, ugly nineteenth-century Chapel of the Tomb, the Holy Sepulchre itself, standing detached in its middle. Opening from the Rotunda is the Catholicon, the Cathedral of the Greeks, while beyond the mighty piers lies the Garden of St. Mary Magdalene in front of the Franciscan chapel and sacristy, the entrance to their tiny monastery. Surrounding the Catholicon, in a huge arc, is the dark ambulatory from which open many chapels, each commemorating some incident of the Passion, such as the Division of the Garments, the Crowning with Thorns, the Scourging and several others, with a flight of broad stairs descending to the depths of St. Helena's Chapel. From there, deeply-worn steps, cut in the rock, lead to the dark cistern which is venerated as the place where the Emperor's mother found the True Cross.

Every inch of flooring and walls is jealously held by one or other of the Churches and many are divided between all or some of them. Calvary, for instance, has one Roman Catholic altar on which stands an image of the Mater Dolorosa smothered in jewelled *ex voto* offerings of immense value. The rest of Calvary, however, belongs to the Greeks, who have a huge, low-relief crucifix set on the spot where it is believed that Christ died. A copy of Pilate's superscription over this tall Cross is composed of magnificent

diamonds. A moveable brass slot in the marble is said to cover the rent in the rock cleft by the earthquake of the first Good Friday. Calvary, nowadays, is a cube of primitive rock, surrounded by masonry and tiled over. Above the roof of its chapel there are several storeys, one of which is the fabulous Treasury of the Greeks, containing the immensely valuable relics and reliquaries of the Patriarchate.

Beneath the Calvary floor is the Greek Sacristy, with more treasures and relics, and also the Chapel of Adam, where one is shown the recess in which it is alleged the skull of Adam remained until it was washed with the Precious Blood, trickling down through the reft made by the earthquake. In this chapel, too, are the defaced tombs of several of the Crusading kings who once ruled in Jerusalem, Godfrey and Baldwin I among them.

There are many galleries, tunnels, caves, recesses, hermitages, the ruins of the Crusader palace and monasteries, old graves dating from biblical times and apartments in profusion, very few of which are ever seen by the casual visitor. A large gallery runs right round the Rotunda, which is shared by the Romans and Armenians, with higher galleries above them owned by the Greeks. From the top of the dome one can look right down on to the Tomb from the interior of the Greek Patriarchate.

As the officer-in-charge I had to know the exact frontiers of each Church's territory as well as their rigid time-tables. These are inflexible, especially those for the ceremonial censuring of the Tomb, the Stone of Unction and of Calvary itself. I had to appreciate details such as that the Armenian Chapel of St. Helena is only Armenian within the area bounded by its four pillars, but Greek from those pillars to the walls, and that the Romans have the right of passage through it to go down to their cistern chapel of the Finding of the Cross; while the Copts have the right of procession from the Armenian altar of St. Helena on four days in the year, and also of censuring it each day at noon and sunset; that the tiles in front of the Mater Dolorosa and the barred chapel of St. Mary of Egypt on Calvary are Roman, but that for two minutes in each day all the Churches have the right to pass it for their censuring of the Cross.

To make matters more difficult there are always clerics waiting to ensure that there is no trespassing on their own Church's rights and there is always danger of actual physical combat. Some monk with an itch for martyrdom, or owning an overmastering and bigoted hatred of those whom he considers schismatics or heretics, or even the wish to gain the limelight for himself, may seize a chance to precipitate a conflict. Let me give two of many such instances that I dealt with.

One morning in June an Armenian lay-brother was savagely beaten by three Coptic monks for sweeping one of the alcoves in the main Rotunda. I restored order and posted a Muslim constable to prevent further trouble while the matter was being investigated. Unfortunately the constable, after some days of unutterable boredom, sneaked off for a cup of coffee in the nearby Christian Quarter. Instantly the fight was resumed and a couple of monks on each side were badly injured. I rushed down to the Sepulchre, prised the struggling heap of ecclesiastics apart, recovered the casualties, threw some of the clerics on each side into the cells at the barracks and, when peace was restored, arranged for it to be upheld by an armed picket.

At the inquiry it was settled, after several days of debating and delving into ancient chronicles and hearing scores of witnesses (who each cheerfully and with dignity perjured himself to maintain his own Church's claims), that there was no answer to be found from the records. Fortunately, the Copts admitted not only that the big oil-painting on the wall of the alcove was Armenian in style and lettering, but that it had been hanging there since before living memory. From that admission we decided that, as it was admittedly an Armenian picture, it could be supported only by an Armenian chain which must, in all reasonableness, hang from an Armenian nail. Ergo, as no one would have driven an Armenian nail into anything but an Armenian wall, the alcove must be Armenian! But I had to keep that armed picket on duty for nearly three months before all danger of Coptic interference was at an end.

One further example. Behind the Coptic segment of the Rotunda are the caves which were left in the virgin rock when Constantine's builders cut their great semicircle in the hillside to accommodate his Basilica. These chambers belong to the Assyrian Church, the only part of the fane they now hold. They contain ancient rock-hewn tombs, which are one of the many proofs that the Holy Sepulchre must have been outside the city walls at the time of Our Lord. In the outer cavern there is a most ancient Assyrian painting on canvas, proof that the chapel is theirs. For weeks tiny pieces of this painting, usually about the size of a postage stamp, were disappearing. This caused great tension, for the Assyrians believed that the Armenians were trying to destroy the picture which was their title-deed. Matters grew very serious and I was afraid of murder being done in that dark corner in which is the traditional tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, the nobleman who gave his own grave to hold the Corpse of the executed Master.

I did everything I could to catch the culprit; I spent long hours in the huge, dank cupboard at one end of the outer chamber, and all without

success. We tried every stratagem, but tiny fragments of the picture were still cut away by a small pair of scissors; more and more of it disappeared and matters became ever more serious. When it seemed certain that there must be killings I ordered the remnants of the picture to be glazed and placed in a stout frame, and loudly proclaimed that the glass and woodwork were Government property. Anyone maliciously damaging them would be guilty of a criminal offence. From that time onwards the picture was not attacked.

The greatest feast day of the year in the Holy Sepulchre is *Sabt-en-Nour*, the Saturday of the Fire, "Holy Fire" as it is usually called, which occurs on the Eve of Easterday; by which date each year I had usually spent the better part of the previous three weeks inside the great and gloomy building. During Holy Week we dealt with scores of emergencies, suppressed disorders at their outset, helped lost and frightened people and kept an eye on the better-known international crooks who came to Jerusalem to glean a rich harvest from the wealthier pilgrims and tourists while they were among the jostling throngs in the church. We always had at least one childbirth among the hundreds of women, mainly Copts, who camp in the Basilica for a week before Easter, and there were always plenty of injuries needing first aid.

The main difficulty with these births was that they usually happened during the night, when we were locked inside the Basilica after the Muslim sheikh, the hereditary Keeper of the Key of the Sepulchre, whose family have held that office ever since Saladin's day, had gone to his home, from which nothing but a general conflagration could bring him. We dealt with cranks and lunatics and people temporarily crazed by their emotions in such a place. These queer folk ranged all the way from people who saw visions in the hope of winning a profit, to one almost unbelievable stigmatic, who suddenly and ecstatically displayed the marks of the Nails, the Crown of Thorns and the lance-thrust in his side, which he said had spontaneously appeared on his body. That incident almost caused a massacre among the awestruck multitude! I saw the wounds myself but I retained my sanity by realizing there must be something natural, and not spiritual, about them, because the nail-wounds, bleeding slowly, followed the conventionalized style of the pictures, being *in the palms of the hands*, where no crucified man could possibly have received them. The crucifier's nails must have always been driven *through the wrists* if the executioner had any intention of his victim remaining affixed to the cross. If they had been forced through the palms the man in his agony would have torn himself loose within a very few minutes.

That poor, deluded fanatic with the Five Wounds in his body was no rogue, like so many were; it was some intense mental paroxysm which had brought the stigmata into existence. We had to be severe, and very quick, in dealing with him, but we fought off the shrieking people before they could go mad themselves. Luckily, I was near him when he began to scream that he had received the stigmata, and instantly grabbed him. Within ten minutes he was on his way to hospital while we convinced the mob of worshippers that the whole thing was a pious fake.

Inside the Great Rotunda during Eastern Holy Week, for twenty feet above the floor in the small Coptic segment, temporary shelves were set in the spaces between the piers; three, and sometimes four, storeys of them. Each platform, of an area about eight feet wide by four deep, was filled with a family from Egypt, men, women and children, who ate, slept and relieved themselves without ever quitting the place. They dared not move because someone else would have moved in the instant they did so and, as they had paid to the Coptic monastery anything up to £200 for their perch, they were determined to keep possession. We stayed very clear of that area, for a lady might at any moment hold her baby out, clear of the edge of the platform, to allow it to relieve itself without the least concern for the people below. The chamber-pots were used with slightly more discretion in "Gardey-loo-Corner" as we called it.

Arab policemen were posted at all the strategic points and particularly at the frontiers between the areas owned by the various Churches. They were men chosen for their giant stature and strength; my old friend Abu Dufada always had the post of honour, the division between the Assyrians and the Copts. Their orders were to keep the rival congregations apart each on its own side of the frontier. Abu Dufada would grab any Copt who infiltrated towards his left and pitch him back like a sack of coal into the swaying, close-packed mass of his religious mates. Any Assyrian trespassing to the giant negro's right suffered a similar fate in the reverse direction. This was very necessary, because, if the Egyptian cotton season had been a good one, thousands of Copts were forced to remain outside the forecourt because their area inside the Basilica was far too small to accommodate a tithe of their number. Naturally, the clergy of the Jerusalem Coptic Bishopric were anxious to pack in as many as they could, for this was their harvest-time and they relied on the proceeds of Holy Week to eke out whatever contributions might come in from pious folks during the rest of the year.

At dawn the great doors of the Basilica were still fast shut, as they had been ever since the last lugubrious chant of the "Funeral of Christ" had

ended on the previous evening, when Sheikh Musa el Deeb, the black-bearded, dignified, manly-looking Hereditary Keeper of the Key, had locked up and gone home. I remained inside all night with about thirty of my policemen and a senior Arab officer, Ibrahim Bey es Stambouli. We set up a temporary police-station in the Chapel of Adam below Calvary, using as benches the stone shelves which are all that now remain of the tombs of Godfrey de Bouillon and King Baldwin the First. Their memorials were destroyed after the disastrous fire of 1808, when the Greeks took their chance to remove them. Ibrahim Bey and I slept fitfully on the broad couches of the Greek sacristy after sitting up for most of the night with the abbot, the Archimandrite Kyriakos, a priest for whom I retain a warm affection.

There were plenty of alarms and excursions. Three years running a child was born, with myself acting as midwife because the few women in the narrow boxes up the wall refused to leave them and help, while the monks of the varying Churches turned away in horror from being implicated in such feminine matters. My experience as a boy with cattle was enough for a straightforward birth; luckily I never had to act in a complicated one of mal-presentation. I got plenty of hot water from the Greek sacristy or the Armenian abbot, and by carrying the groaning woman into the Chapel of the Crowning with Thorns, off the ambulatory, we managed fairly well, though usually her husband would refuse to leave his box for fear of losing it. I judged the right moment when the pulsation in the cord had ceased before I severed and bound it, and once the baby was born alive there were women willing to carry on from that point, so long as they had not got to leave their shelves. I thanked the Lord God for the sturdy fashion in which Eastern women bear their children.

We had stabbing cases, gave first aid to the victims and arrested the attackers. Usually these were normal affairs, caused by the women, perched in their narrow shelves, quarrelling and involving their menfolk, just as women will do all over the world. Yussef Ahmet Nour, my big negro, assisted by the other black man whom I loved, Corporal Mohammed Shamrouk, once found an Italian lurking near the glass-fronted case shielding the Mater Dolorosa on Calvary. They searched him, found a glass-cutter and a small jointed jemmy and brought him to me. Further search exposed several ingeniously hidden pockets in his clothes. His plans were to cut out a piece of the glass just before the doors were due to open, extract as many of the jewelled rings and *ex voto* golden hearts coruscating on that wonderful statue as he could, and then to make his escape in the general confusion when the pilgrims flooded in.

One alarm of fire in the public conveniences which mask the entrance to the ancient Royal apartments of the Crusading kings, and one attempted rape in the Chapel of the Finding of the Cross, in which the attacker escaped, were the highlights of one such night. I spent a couple of hours before midnight in the refectory of the Franciscans, which opens from the place where Mary Magdalene is said to have first seen her risen Lord, and discussed a bottle of wine with a couple of Spanish friars, great friends of mine.

In the centre of everything, dark despite its glimmering lamps, the Chapel of the Tomb towered into the darkness of the great dome, amid the stench of the people in the boxes and those who had emerged from a score of lairs after the locking of the door. We always tried to sweep the great church clear of the hundreds of worshippers who had no accommodation, but we were never completely successful, for the hiding-places are legion and the anxiety of the folks who were not able to pay the monks to reserve a place inside were so intense that they defeated us every time.

At dawn on the Day of Holy Fire a detachment of a few British and Arab police from the barracks arrived outside and we spoke to them through the little hatchway in the door to make what new arrangements were necessary. This hatchway is meant for the passing of the sealed food-containers sent down from their different monasteries for the use of the monks of the various Churches who are stationed inside. It is a fitting commentary that the steel containers for the Franciscans and Greeks always arrive under the guard of one of their *kawasses*, a ceremonial bodyguard, and with their padlocks carefully sealed as a guarantee against the food being poisoned en route!

The forecourt was crammed to suffocation point with the hordes of pilgrims all anxious to be present when the door opened.¹

The whole place seethed with fervent life, a murmur of prayers rose to the lightening skies, all mingled with the shouted offers of Jerusalemites promising to find good seats for anyone who could pay for them, one of the cruellest confidence tricks in the world, for none of the cheats could fulfil their bargains.

Zero hour arrived when stately Sheikh Musa el Deeb, the Hereditary Keeper of the Door, arrived around eight o'clock, carrying the great iron key. His servants brought a short ladder, which they reared against the shut valves of the door, while the police, in triple chain, kept the crowd back as it

¹ I am describing a Holy Fire Day before the Earthquake of July 11th, 1927, which led to the placing of huge steel girders and buttresses to prevent the total collapse of the neglected and tottering structure. These girders have, for several years now, covered half the forecourt. The building is so badly damaged that intending worshippers or tourists enter the Basilica at their own risk, so imminent is the final ruin.

surged forward in its eagerness to find standing room within. The locks are some of the most interesting and ancient in the world, strange, barrel-shaped engines, over six centuries old, with the upper one set nearly eight feet from the ground and the lower about four.

The uproar grew tremendous as the pilgrims saw the locks coming away and the police outside were soon fighting hard to keep them back, until the valves of the door could be swung clear. By fighting I mean just that; sticks, whips, fists, pick-shafts, everything was used, for, if the mad rush was allowed to take form too early, plenty of weaker persons, especially women and children, would be crushed to death between the Stone of Unction and the masonry surrounding the Calvary platform.

We had learned to make the proper dispositions; how to place parties of police at different angles with a wedge of the strongest men in the centre, to break the initial onrush of the turbulent flood of pilgrims and force them to slow down. The yells of the people in the foremost ranks as they strained away from the belabouring police against the dead weight of the crowd pressing behind them made a furious chaos. My main concern was to hurry worthy Sheikh Deeb and so get the door open before the line of police was thrust back against the solid wood and iron. I had to judge the exact instant to slip through and take over command.

Ibrahim Bey had charge of a police-party ranged behind the Stone of Unction to check the violence of the first onslaught, which often broke right across the Stone. They had all the alabaster lamps, ostrich eggs and other knick-knacks removed to safety until the first mad rush was over. The scene and the noise were unbelievable, as six or seven thousand frenzied people surged forward. It was quite hopeless to attempt to stop them; all that we could hope to do was to conduct a fighting retreat and so slow down the unstoppable before it became the uncontrollable.

It took a great deal of leadership, violence, domination and hard fighting to preserve the lives of these devoted zealots. I had to joke with one, savagely hit another, gently push a third, curse a fourth and, by mixing all ways of handling them, quickly gain control. At the same time the exuberance of the Arab policemen had to be controlled, most of them being staunch Muslim and only too happy to have a smack at these Christian infidels attending their false temple.¹ In addition we had to attend to any of them who got hurt, and

¹ The Muslim do not believe in the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ and so have no respect for the Holy Sepulchre, which they call "The Dungheap", a rhyming pun on the Arabic name for the Basilica. They venerate the Master as one of the Greater Prophets of their Faith and have always respected the Basilica at Bethlehem, which they have never totally destroyed as has happened, several times, to the Holy Sepulchre.

be ready to aid any one who looked like going down under the trampling feet of the crowd, for the flagstones of the Holy Sepulchre are very slippery from the polishing of millions of feet.

It was all over very quickly, for we were swept back by the onrush. I was lifted bodily and carried on the lip of the crowd, never touching the ground until I was balancing myself on the Stone of Unction, fighting for a foothold as I joined Ibrahim Bey's party. They went promptly into action and so prevented fatalities among the crowd by splitting it, and sending it either towards the Rotunda to the left or into the dark ambulatory to the right. Pickets on the two narrow staircases leading up to Calvary prevented any infiltration on to the sacred platform; other policemen stopped them entering the Greek or Armenian sacristy or any other door, for the shouting, sweating pilgrims tried to reach any place from which they, and their families, could get a view of the ceremonies and so feel themselves part of the vast congregation. It was important that they should be kept away from the quarters occupied by the Franciscan friars, who ostentatiously take no part nor parcel in the ceremony, so that the only empty places in the whole vast building is their gallery above the Rotunda and their chapel near the Garden. If that had happened the Franciscans, in allowing the trespassers, might have been roughly handled by the members of the rival Churches and then Geneva would certainly have heard all about the inadequate police arrangements.

The purpose of the whole ceremony is to witness the supposed miraculous descent of the Holy Fire on the Sepulchre, on this feast-day dedicated to the Lying-in-the-Tomb of the Master. The majority of the simple-minded Eastern pilgrims firmly believed that they were witnesses of a miracle, annually renewed.

The shouting, the stench, the noise of gongs, hand-bells and, dominating all else, the beating of the musical planks, which the Armenians employ instead of church bells because of an ancient Muslim interdict against the latter, made an inferno of heat and sweat and cacophony almost impossible to imagine. Anything more unlike the atmosphere of a great cathedral at home cannot be imagined. Women shrieking for lost children, men cursing and fighting one another to avenge some affront, priests trying to insinuate particularly important and wealthy pilgrims into a favoured position, screaming wrangles about who had paid for which seat, and the police roaring commands as they did their best to keep order. Put all these together and you may have some idea of the pandemonium in this holiest of all Christian shrines on the greatest day of its year.

My first task, after seeing that a lane was kept clear through the great

mob in the Rotunda, was to watch the various areas for the first signs of overcrowding. The Copts were the worst offenders because they had a far larger number of pilgrims waiting outside than any of the other Churches. When I saw that the Coptic area, which with intensive packing can hold perhaps 500 people, was becoming full, I went to the main door of the Basilica, where there were perhaps 5000 still in the forecourt, all determined to get in and see the miracle of the Holy Fire for themselves, most having paid good piastres for the honour. They were extremely dangerous people with whom to meddle, for every single one of them was afire with an almost Crusading fervour and quite prepared, in their crazy exultation, to die on the threshold of God's own Sepulchre. The only chance was to strike so quickly, and with such paralysing strength and efficiency, that all thoughts of fight were shocked out of them before they could have time to think things over.

I am describing one of the Holy Saturdays when the Greek Christian feast day coincided with the Muslim festival of *Nebi Musa* to make us very short of men for duty at either place. *Nebi Musa* is a festival devised in the latter days of the Crusade by shrewd Muslim rulers, wishful to ensure an overwhelming number of their own people being in Jerusalem at the time of Eastertide, for fear that the Christians might attempt to seize the Holy City while their pilgrims were there in strength. Ostensibly, *Nebi Musa* is a pilgrimage made, *via* the Temple area of Jerusalem, to the supposed grave of the Prophet Moses, which they have located, to their own satisfaction, in a big mosque in the dry hills of the Wilderness of Judah, close to Jericho and the northern end of the Dead Sea and not far from the cave where the Old Testament rolls were found in 1947.

Each village of Muslim peasants sent large contingents to Jerusalem on the appointed day, escorting the sacred banners from Hebron and Nablus. These banners were accompanied by swordsmen and spearmen who marched proudly alongside it with drummers and dancers around them. Behind them came thousands of peasants, all highly excited and ripe for any mischief when they neared Jerusalem and saw the crowds of infidels, Jews and Christians, assembled for their own feasts.

The Northern contingent from Nablus entered through the Damascus Gate, the Southern (and the more numerous and dangerous) carried the Banner of Hebron through the Jaffa Gate. From thence they swirled down through the narrow Street of David, which divides the Christian and Muslim Quarters to the north, from the Jewish and Armenian Quarters on the south. Every side-street had to be held in force by the police to stop any of those

fanatics from breaking into the Jewish Quarter, and commencing a massacre there, as had happened in the past. Our few men had to be everywhere during that long dancing-march to the Temple Area, where stands the mosque of the Dome of the Rock and the venerable El Akhsa, one of the holiest places of worship in all Islam.

Roof-tops had to be patrolled to prevent any chance of some young Orthodox Jew imitating Ben Hur by throwing a tile, or a basin of bedroom slops, on to the sacred banners beneath. That had happened during our control of the Holy City. It was a very exhausting tour of duty, wearisome to the tempers and extremely uncomfortable, for what amounted to martial law was maintained in the Old City during the week or so of the pilgrimage, so that our men were extremely glad when they moved out of their temporary, and often verminous, billets in the Old City to return to the cleanliness and fresh air of their own barracks on Mount Scopus. Ordinary organization was abrogated during this time and officers from all over Palestine arrived to take command of sectors while the pilgrims of the three great creeds filled the Holy City.

With the new economies, the Public Security Forces were woefully short of men, for, after the disbandment of the Gendarmerie and the transformation of its native section into the Transjordanian Frontier Force, we had only 120 British and about 1800 Palestinian policemen in the whole country, and not a single Imperial soldier to support them! When Eastertide came the rest of the country had to be held by "two men and the ship's cat" and we prayed that we might have no serious border forays or bad cases of brigandage on the main roads while our available strength was tied up in Jerusalem. It was a sheer gamble which succeeded in these earlier years only because there was still such a vast store of goodwill for the British remaining among the native people. It was a hoard, however, which was dissipating very fast as the impact of the Jewish immigrants grew.

To return to Holy Fire. Once we had checked the inrush of the Coptic pilgrims we quickly established a strong post across the doorway of Holy Sepulchre. Trouble really started when the disappointed thousands outside howled their angry disappointment. It was never long before some of them roared for a headlong charge to sweep away the Muslim clergyman, policemen, and the heretical British officers in charge of them; in the raving fanatics would dash, anxious to clear the road to the Blessed Tomb. Fortunately, as is always the case with crowds facing determined and disciplined men, there were plenty of people very anxious to hang back in an indecisive pause, waiting to see what might happen before they committed themselves.

The front ranks of the pilgrims, impelled forward by the zealots in the rear, fought back hard as they were swept irresistibly towards our waiting line. This was the critical second when by launching a counter-attack across the last few yards we drove the whole lot back. In their flurry they often fell in long swathes, giving us a chance to regain our position and to re-form before they could recover their feet.

After a few attempts, each feebler than the one before it, the fight went out of the crowd. Finally, they stood still glaring their hatred, shouting that they had paid for their places and would I kindly send one of my men to fetch Father So-and-So or the monk Such-and-Such, who had taken five pounds from them to assure their getting seats? After a while the whole mob would simmer down, especially after I had told them that the Coptic space was so limited that there was not room for any more of them. I always tried to retain the goodwill of the Coptic bishopric by suggesting to the crowd that the money they had given to the priests was well spent, because it enabled clerics of their own Church to pray for them at the most sacred shrines in all Christendom. After arguments with wealthier Egyptians who would sidle through the crowd and advance their personal claims to a place inside, generally with the offer of a bribe, I usually managed to get back to the Rotunda, where the tension was rapidly mounting. I left a junior Arab officer in charge of the blocking-party at the doors to pick out members of the different sects trying to enter the Basilica, and to allow those whose churches still had accommodation to pass in. More distinguished visitors arrived later, escorted by the gorgeously-liveried *kawasses*, complete with silver mace and silver-scabbarded scimitar, who brought them from the consulates and abbeys.

Inside the Basilica the vast crowd and the families on the precarious shelves gave full vent to their feelings, shouting slogans, greetings and prayers in one fierce hubbub. Fruit-skins and crusts littered the broad flag-stones, trampled into a common slippery mess with the refuse from the boxes. The smell and the heat were terrific; each person carried a bunch of thin candles, bound together, with which to catch the sacred fire when it came at noonday.

My next duty was to pay proper compliments to the great prelates as they arrived, and to see that they had unhindered passage to their respective sanctuaries. Senior Government officials, many of them wearing their war-time uniforms, arrived to form the ceremonial escort provided by the Government, as it had been in Ottoman days, for His Beatitude the Orthodox and Oecumenical Patriarch of Jerusalem. Bells and musical planks thundered,

almost unnoticed in the roar of close on 15,000 people massed on the floor of the Great Rotunda, the din rising to a new crescendo as the Patriarchs arrived.

By that time we usually had a wide lane right round the Sepulchre swept clear of people. The different congregations were remustered in their respective areas, although there was a constant struggle on each frontier as people attempted to infiltrate and were savagely repulsed by their neighbours. Priests were fluttering about, striving to fit just one more of their own community in among their congregations; only the sanctity of their office saving them from violent assault by the exasperated, sweating people, all dressed in their best.

Nearly an hour would pass while the distinguished visitors were taken through the crowd to their seats of honour. The fiery zeal of the mob increased every moment as the time for the "miracle" drew closer. I was always being called away to deal with either thieves who had been caught at the doors, with cases needing first aid, or to interview people outside who asserted their importance sufficiently strongly to make the Arab officer feel a trifle dubious about refusing them admittance.

My main task was to maintain that lane round the Chapel of the Tomb, so that the prelates might pass freely when they made their processions after the Holy Fire had flashed down on to the Sepulchre itself. At last the time came for the formal search of the Tomb by the District Commissioner and a couple of other senior British officers, who, on its completion, proclaimed to the world at large that they had found no hidden combustibles, nor any means of ignition, within the Chapel.

This Chapel of the Tomb consists of two small chambers, the outer one being that of the Angel, which admits one, through a four-foot-high and very narrow door, into the Tomb itself. This looks very like a ornate ship's cabin, for one side of it is a seven-foot bunk-like marble slab nearly a yard wide, that is said to cover the actual rock-hewn Tomb of the Lord, and stands about thirty inches from the floor. The rest of this little Chapel is a strip about a yard wide of marble flooring. The District Commissioner and his staff entered the Chapel, accompanied by a couple of high dignitaries of the Orthodox Church, and when they emerged the two halves of the small door were closed with white ribbons, and an imposing amount of wax bearing the seals of the District Commission and that of the Patriarchate was applied.

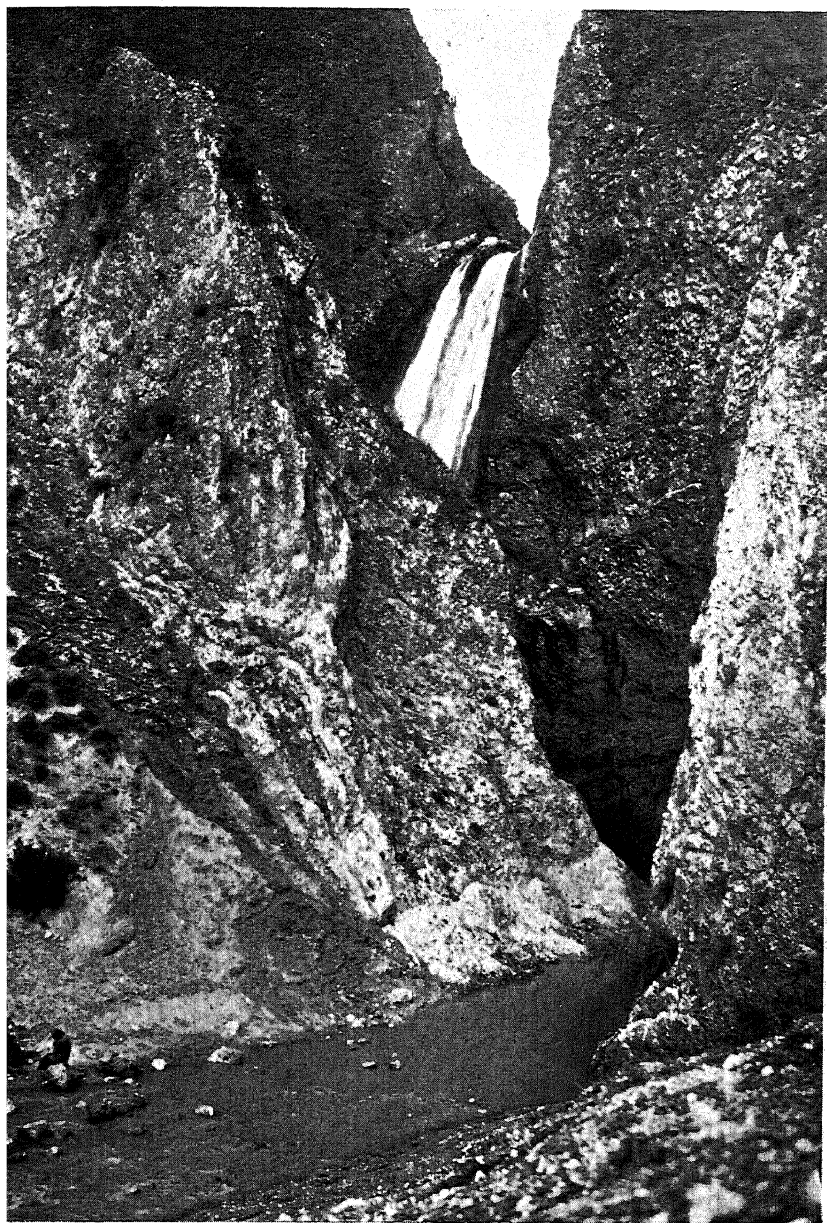
Matters swiftly became more hectic, though none of the congregation realized that, behind the left-hand half of the outer door, there is a tiny spiral

staircase leading to the roof of the Chapel (which, as I have said, stands as a complete building in the middle of the Rotunda). Inside this stairway was crouched an Orthodox monk carrying a mixture of highly inflammable articles and completely concealed while the doors of the Chapel were open. He was the person who touched off the fire when the moment came.

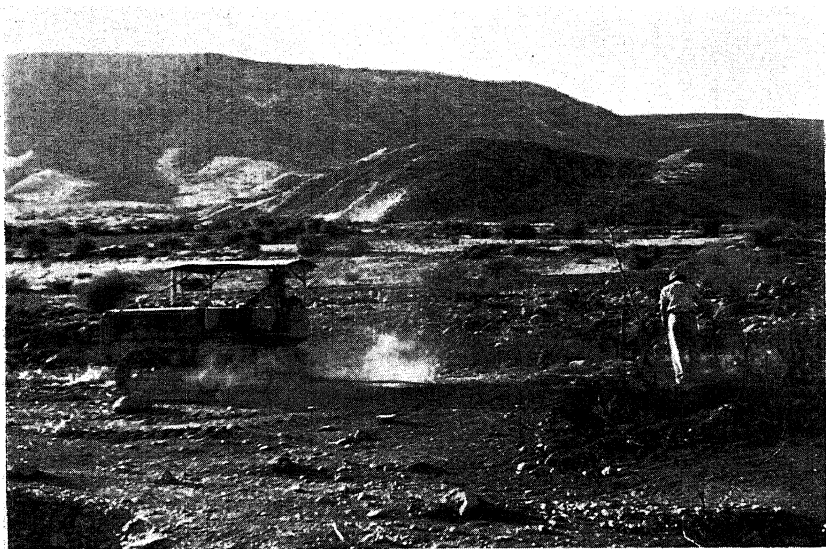
When the venerable, majestically-bearded Patriarch, crowned in glorious jewels, appeared in the doorway of the Greek Catholicon, a few feet away from, and directly in line with, the sealed doors of the Tomb, a great hush fell for the first time since dawn. The District Commissioner proclaimed that His Beatitude was not carrying anything which could make fire and then the Patriarch stood praying before the sealed door amid the high nasal chanting of the Orthodox choir. The great hush persisted until with dramatic suddenness there came a gush of flame from one of the round port-holes in the north side of the sealed Chapel. In ancient times the game was played even better, for in those days the Holy Fire rushed down an impregnated cord, invisible to the crowds, from the top of the dome and entered the Tomb, while the people watched its "actual descent from Heaven". Nowadays, there is more discretion, but the Holy Fire still gushes convincingly from the Tomb and the whole vast congregation goes mad as they fight to light their bunches of candles.

The candles came swaying down from the balcony above, from the boxes of the Copts, from a dozen cornices where men and women had been precariously perched for hours, while a deafening clangour of bells, musical planks and drums thundered and rocked the whole building which, in an instance, became a sea of flame. Down by the port-hole there were athletes, stripped for racing, standing crouched with torches ready, to snatch the first of the flame. They are the men who run a marathon to Christian villages such as Bethlehem, Ramallah, Bir es Zeit and Beireh to carry the "miraculous" light to their own little churches and to the few villagers who have stayed at home.

Thousands of eyes glittered with ecstasy. I have seen men and women actually bathing their faces in the fire of their bunch of candles. Other bundles, streaming wax and flaring luridly, being hauled up to the perches and the balcony, burned through their strings and tapes and came roaring down like meteors. My policemen turned at once and fought these bunches of destruction, stamping out flames on the ground, smothering the burning dresses of the women until, in a few seconds, the whole vast space was murky with the cloud of blue smoke rolling upwards, with people coughing and choking in the bitter reek of tallow and wax.



Water in a barren-land. A welcome sight in the dry and arid Holy Land. The waterfall near Metullah in Upper Galilee



Making the desert blossom. The start of cultivation in a new Jewish Colony in the Southern Desert where there has been no agriculture since the seventh century



A new home in the desert-land south of Beersheba.
The commencement of a new colony

I always kept my bugler close to me, as well as my negroes. They were a staunch striking-force, and, while the people were still confused by the fire, we went round the Tomb like the wrath of the gods, cleaving open the lane which had been overrun in the overpowering enthusiasm. It was a case of seizing the crucial moment and of thrusting the zealots back before they realized what was happening. It was at this point that my close liaison with the ecclesiastical authorities paid a handsome dividend, for the Greek superiors hustled their choirboys and minor clergy out of their own Catholicon and quickly formed them up in a long, quadruple line, with their banners aloft, their censers smoking, and their mouths opening in chants entirely unheard in the colossal din. Then, gloriously vested, the bishops and archimandrites came out and joined the tail of the procession, with the Patriarch himself, in his golden cope, his serpent-headed staff and wearing the Cross of Palaeologus on his head.

This is one of the most costly and precious liturgical head-dresses in the world, for it stands about eighteen inches high in the form of a cross. Its base is padded to form a cap for His Beatitude; while one side of the glowing glory is covered in a blaze of large diamonds of fine water, the other is coated with rubies of the finest pigeon-blood hue, while very large emeralds gleam like sea-water on the broad base. Inside it, behind a screen of rock crystal, are two small match-sized slivers of blackened wood, which are some of the largest fragments of the True Cross in the world.

The sight of this most venerable and ancient relic helped to restore some semblance of order, for the Greek congregation, who are the first to be passed, fell silent and crossed themselves, forehead, midriff, *right* shoulder, *then* left, to distinguish their sign from the Romans'. Even the Assyrian laity and the Copts looked at it with awe, and when the final segment, held by the Armenians, was reached, the grave monks and their stalwart followers gazed at the refulgent glory with reverence and the sovereign good manners which are the hall-mark of their ancient race.

The Greek Orthodox Patriarch makes three circumambulations of the Chapel of the Tomb, stopping for prayers each time he reaches its door. I walked at his left hand, very ready to deal with anyone who might leap from the crowd and snatch at those hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of jewels he was wearing on his head. We had special men at the door, armed and ready to deal with any gang of thieves who might try to carry it away.

I sighed my relief when the third round was ended and the venerable figure of the Patriarch disappeared into his own Catholicon. It was a difficult

task to protect his jewels and, even more important, the majestic old man himself, from both the zeal of his own laity and from any schismatic who might have the idea of winning martyrdom by striking down the head of a rival Church.

I always carried my stout old shillelagh and used it fairly freely, and I was closely attended by my loyal negroes, who, in their turn, guarded my back from attackers. When the Greek procession was safely out of the way, the really anxious time started, for then we had to guard a procession of Copts, Assyrians and Armenians all assembled in the same *cortège*. Our first duty was to marshal them and then to check their numbers, which are very strictly laid down by the *status quo*. Each of the three Churches always tried to include extra people to enhance the dignity of its own display. Devout Copts would give all they possessed to be able to return home to Egypt and boast for the rest of their lives that they had been included among the dignitaries in the procession of the Holy Fire in Jerusalem.

I weeded them out, ruthlessly dismissing any in excess of the allotted number, and then the arguments would start, priests insisting that the ejected man must stay, while the wretched fellow, weeping with rage, demanded his rights. I had to be ruthless, for there was no time for half-measures; the displaced man was given the choice of going straight to jail, or of getting out of the way.

The difficulty was to start the procession moving. The Armenians, who were the leaders, complained that they could not stir because of the Assyrians immediately ahead of them, who formed its tail; the Assyrians in their turn made the same objection against the Copts who, to complete the very vicious circle, stated that the Armenian rear was blocking their advance. Ibrahim Bey es Stambouli showed me the answer. Selecting the biggest and fattest Coptic layman in the procession carrying a banner or a cross, and who was also the least likely to make any effective complaint afterwards, I formed up a line of my dismounted troopers immediately behind him and, when all the priests and acolytes were in position, I forced the unfortunate man forward with a hefty push in his back.

As he staggered into a stumble my Arab troopers started to back-heel with their spurs, rowelling the plump legs of the line of choristers next astern, forcing them to fill the gap vacated by the man I had pushed. All I had to do after that was to work very fast and to hustle the next rank into the place which the choristers had vacated and, by judicious heaving, and an occasional blow with the toe of my riding-boot, or a rowelling with my spurs, to get the whole circle moving. My negroes joined in happily and, in a

minute or so, the whole glittering mass was starting to rotate along its route.

My particular anxiety on one such Holy Fire Day was that I knew the Assyrians were bitterly angry with the Armenians over a quarrel some weeks old, and I carefully watched Abuna Yacoub, their Archimandrite, a fine fellow who was the centre and ringleader of the Assyrian faction. I hoped with all my heart that the feast would pass without any incident, but the thought of those 500 corpses which Curzon the English pilgrim had counted, laid out in the forecourt after a Holy Fire of the 1830s, was ever in my mind.

Three times round went the procession until the Armenians reached the doors of the Tomb Chapel, where they performed their ritual and moved off, meaning to pass right round the back of the Rotunda and so reach their own private church upstairs. Unfortunately, the Armenian head came into collision with the Assyrian tail at the narrowest point outside the Coptic altar, where the Assyrian Patriarch of Antioch, a visitor, was sitting on his throne waiting his turn to move forward as soon as the Copts, who had taken the place of the Armenians in front of the Chapel, completed their service.

High and angry words passed between the leading Armenians, who were the least responsible part of their congregation, and the venerable Assyrian prelates grouped around the throne of their Patriarch. The latter pointed out that they could not move until the Copts had cleared their front, but an Armenian layman, filled with rage and zeal against this interloper who was preventing his own revered Patriarch's passage, seized the gilded throne and spilled the heir of the satraps on to the slimy, filthy floor of the Basilica.

Roaring like some general of Sennacherib's bodyguard, Abuna Yacoub, a magnificent specimen of his race, six feet tall and at least sixty years old, snatched a banner from a deacon's hand, snapped its eight-foot staff across his knee and, with four feet or so of stout timber in his hand, went berserk as he charged into the Armenian ranks. The sound of battle roared through the Basilica, instantly mingled with the caterwauling of hundreds of women striving to escape with their children. A stampede for the doorway instantly started and we might easily have had a repetition of what Curzon saw all those years ago if prompt action had not been taken.

My four negroes yelled with savage delight as they dashed into action at my heels, their eyes a-glitter, their pick-shafts aloft, as I started to ply my shillelagh in order to carve a way through the milling mob to reach the epicentre of the storm, where Abuna Yacoub's tinsel and velvet crown was as

conspicuous as the White Plume of Navarre. It was like the *mêlée* of a mediaeval battle, war-cries, yells, shouts and roars of fury, the floor covered with torn vestments, filth and bodies, both conscious and senseless. Banners swayed back and forth overhead, pick-shafts, batons, sticks, even shoes, were being wielded as I clove my way through, almost berserk myself, until I found Abuna Yacoub bestriding his fallen Patriarch and using his banner pole like a quarterstaff. I parried his blow, caught him by his long grey beard while my negroes fought off the Assyrians, and then I started to tow the Archimandrite out of action.

Dragging him clear, although he had meanwhile been knocked almost unconscious by a British corporal, I grabbed at my bugler as he dived past, his honest peasant face alight with the sheer joy of fight and bade him blow a few notes. To my amusement, he blew "The Officers' Mess Call", a favourite of his and the high singing notes of his bugle did all I hoped. They cut through the uproar and made people pause. Taking advantage of the momentary hush, I managed to reassure the panic-stricken mob and, once the fight was stopped, no one seemed anxious to renew it. A hand-picked bunch of clerics from both sides were hustled off to jail in the barracks and then, humbly assisting the fallen Patriarch to rise, and doing my best to restore his dignity, I made sure that his ritual was completed with all due respect.

The ceremonies were then ended and the Sepulchre began to clear of its vast congregations. Only the ultra-devout remained with us throughout the Resurrection Eve, mainly Russian women, the relicts of Czarist days, most of them nuns or servants to nuns.

With the ending of the Easter service the main work for the year in the Holy Sepulchre was ended. I was kissed by all the old Russian women as they streamed out of the Basilica on Easter morning, their eyes shining, their souls filled with joy.

"Rejoice, brother, Christ is risen," they chanted happily as they kissed me. I had learned just enough of their language to reply.

"He is risen indeed, sister," and kissed their puckered old cheeks in reply.

And now as a final word, I attach what a distinguished French author thought of these scenes, or of ones like them, in the Holy Sepulchre. Here are some paragraphs from Roland Dorgele's book *La Caravane sans Chameaux*, which, if not exactly complimentary to me, at least gives the onlooker's point of view. He is describing the Roman Catholic Easter services, which sometimes coincided with the celebrations of the Eastern Churches,

“Oui, justement, voici le police. Les Palestiniens à bonnet astrakhan se sont rués dans la foule et, avançant à grand coups d’épaule, ils balayent le pourtour. *‘Irja! Ourra! Recule . . . En arrière’* les entend-on crier. Mais la cohue se défend, on se cramponne, on résiste et l’on dirait que la police est sur le point de lâcher pied. Alors, à l’improviste, l’inspecteur Duff paraît. Grand, gros, énorme, les joues écarlates, des cheveux blonds sous le kalpak noir, sanglé dans une tunique kaki dont le ceinturon va éclater, il s’élance dans la mêlée. Il joue des reins, du coude, prend des gaillards pas les oreilles, saisit des poignées due cheveux et repoussant, reversant, empilant, il creuse en un clin d’œil une tranchée. Le chemin de croix est overt . . .

“Autrefois, sous le régime turc, c’était aux gardiens musulmans qu’incombait la police des Lieux Saints: maintenant elle revient à l’Angleterre et l’Angleterre, ici, c’est ce massif Irlandais, servi saignant comme un biftek. Tout la Palestine le connaît, tout Jérusalem le redoute, et, quand il passe dans sa vieille Ford dont il occupé seul les deux sièges de devant, les têtes se décoiffent et les keffiyés s’inclinent. L’inspecteur Duff, c’est un symbole, une des pierres angulaire du mandat. Pour un grand office, on peut à la rigueur se passer du patriarche; pas de Duff. S’il y a des troubles le Haut Commissaire peut partir en congé: mais que Duff soit là. Cette grosse chose vivante, c’est le pouvoir de l’Europe en Terre Saint.”

He carries on with a most excellent description of a Great Feast day in the Holy Sepulchre and I freely forgive him his description of my physical size, for he has spoken the truth. Out of sheer vanity I will add part of a paragraph a couple of pages further on.

“Quand il (the Latin Patriarch) arrive dans l’abside, entre la chapelle des Syriens et celle des Copts, les schismatiques tentent une dernière sortie, dressant leur croix et agitant leurs encensoirs. Des forcenés que grise le tumulte, glissent entre les policiers et se jettent en travers du cortège. Mais Duff est toujours là! Il escorte le patriarche, sa cravache sous le bras, et, tandis que l’un bénit, l’autre cogne. Les Syriens sont rejetés à droite, les Copts culbutés à gauche, et protégé par cette distribution de coups de botte, le Saint-Sacrament passe, salué par un chant glapissant pareil à ce qu’on entend dans les cafés du Caire.”

“IF I FORGET THEE, O JERUSALEM”

DEALING with people of all races, of every degree from saints to professional “converts”, from millionaires to professional mendicants, and being responsible for the Holy Places, made Jerusalem Division the most fascinating post that any man could hold. More especially so in 1926, when the whole City, both inside and outside the walls, was under my single command.

But, before I leave the Holy Sepulchre, there was one incident in which I was honoured to bear a part. In the days of the Crusading kingdom many of its nobles and knights were buried beneath the forecourt, but all trace of their graves have long since disappeared, obliterated by the trampling feet of the pilgrim multitudes throughout the centuries. Only one memorial remained, lying slightly to one side of the doorway, saved only because a stone bench for the Ottoman guard had stood over it until it was removed by Allenby’s men because it was often a fatal hazard on greater feast days. That bench had claimed scores of lives during the centuries it stood there, those of people crushed to death against it by the mad stampede of the pious mob. When it was taken away a long slab of Bethlehem marble, of the same material as the paving of the forecourt, was exposed, and on it was a well-preserved inscription and a shield bearing a knightly coat of arms.

It covered the body of an English knight! Of all the millions who had died on Crusade in the Holy Land this is the only tomb whose occupant is known. He was Sir Philip Daubigny of Somerset, tutor to young King Henry the Third and one of the leaders at Runnymede when King John signed the Charter. Later on he was Governor of the Channel Islands until his erstwhile pupil’s brother, Richard, Duke of Cornwall and the only English Holy Roman Emperor, went on Crusade, and the ageing warrior accompanied him to Palestine.

Philip Daubigny was present when the Emperor Frederick the Second (who was himself excommunicated and against whom a Crusade was being waged at home while he fought his truer Crusade in the Holy Land) secured Jerusalem by treaty for ten years, all except the Temple Area, which remained Muslim. After the ten years were ended Sir Philip turned guerilla and became a terror to the Saracen masters of the Holy City, but when

plague broke out within the walls, he doffed his armour and came in to nurse the stricken. He died doing his works of mercy and his enemies paid him the sovereign compliment of burying him at the door of Holy Sepulchre.

Two years after the removal of the stone bench, Sir Philip's escutcheon and inscription were becoming so badly worn by the feet of pilgrims and tourists that it was decided to move the stone to one side to preserve it. I was present when it was shifted the required eighteen inches and we were glad when we found that all the old knight's bones were less than a foot beneath the stone. We sank the stone six inches beneath the level of the pavement and hoped that we had preserved it for many centuries, for though the cross-marked iron grill which we set above it must rust and wear away, at least no feet will rush over the rectangular pit we made. It will probably fill with rubbish, but our descendants' eyes will be able to uncover it and read that inscription and to study that honourable shield-of-arms above the bones we reinterred beneath it.

About that time I escorted a party of European priests, doctors and officials, who were commissioned to open the grave of a Carmelite nun at Bethlehem, a Sister Mary of the Angels, as part of her process of beatification then being made at the Vatican. It was considered advisable that a British officer of Palestine police should be among the party in case he might be needed. I expected nothing but the usual exhumation, to which I was only too well used, as I had been present at many connected with murder cases. I was extremely glad that the woman had been dead for close on fifty years, so that there would be none of the nauseous ghastliness of our usual dealings with the recently buried.

The grave was duly opened and, as the Carmelite nuns in Palestine are not coffined for sepulture, we quickly reached the bundle of cere-clothes and the habit in which the body was wrapped at its funeral. Then came the amazing and unbelievable thing; the young female corpse was as fresh as though Sister Mary had died an hour earlier! There were no stains on the grave clothes such as I usually saw; she was completely incorrupt! I was extremely impressed, but as I feared fraud I stayed while the non-Catholic medical men made their examination. They certified that there was no evidence of embalming and a chemist who analysed the soil in the grave said that there was neither arsenic, such as is found in some Cornish churchyards, nor any other chemical which might have preserved the body.

That is all; but I had a great deal of good done to my soul by being present at the exhumation of the gentle Carmelite nun. It knocked out of me the fatuous conceit which was making me an atheistic fool. I would

add that no fresh body could have been substituted to deceive the examiners, for the ground was undisturbed.

I became acquainted with a hoary fraud which has been practised in Jerusalem for many centuries. This was usually worked by some Europeans or Americans who leased a house deep in the Old City, from which they sent letters to people all over the world, quoting the apposite texts from Scripture anent the imminence of the End of the World and the nearness of the Last Day of Judgment. This was their groundbait; after they had received replies from their dupes, the criminals wrote again, once more quoting Holy Writ, advising them to sell all they possessed and remit the proceeds to the Church in Jerusalem before coming out themselves to join the small body of the elect who were assembling in Zion to be the first to meet their Lord. In other words, they offered reserved seats at the Last Judgment for those who could pay for them.

It was astonishing how many people were deceived by this claptrap. Most were folks who had some small savings and were over-anxious about the salvation of their own souls. They-couldn't-take-it-with-them-but-they-were-arranging-for-it-to-be-banked-in-Heaven.

Usually the organizers left Palestine a good week ahead of their dupes' group-arrival to join the Community of the Faithful-waiting-with-their-lamps-trimmed-for-the-coming-of-the-Bridegroom. We were saddled with destitute and very angry people, who had to be repatriated at the public expense. Shortly after I assumed command of the Jerusalem Divisional Police, I had the great joy of catching one of these practitioners. He was a Canadian who had reaped a fairly rich harvest, mainly from people in the Middle Western States of America. But he still had so many "prospects" outstanding that he stayed on to catch the last remittances that were actually on their way before his group arrived.

One morning an old man and his aged wife were brought to my office, charged with having made a disturbance in the Old City. When I discovered that they were Americans, I telephoned to their Consulate, for we were not allowed to deal with citizens of the United States. America was not a member of the League of Nations and so had no overt hand in the administration of the Mandate; her nationals were treated under the old capitulations of the Turkish Sultanate.

This old couple had arrived in Jerusalem expecting to find a fully-fledged Church of earnest Christians, awaiting in prayer and almsgiving, the Second Advent. They had sold all they possessed and sent it to the Canadian "apostle" but, when they arrived, slightly ahead of schedule, they

quickly detected the fraud and became extremely vociferous. While they were expressing their dissatisfaction in a very active fashion a patrol of Palestinian police had arrived and removed them to my office.

I sent the old people to the American Consulate which, in those days, was in a side-road near the wall of the Muslim cemetery of Mammillah, and after getting a search-warrant at the District Commissioner's office, I dashed for the Canadian's house. I only just caught him, for there was a car at the door and he was heading for the Lloyd Triestino packet-ship due to sail from Jaffa at six that evening.

He tried to bluff that he was merely a humble saviour of souls but, when he saw that I meant business and produced my warrant of search, the mask dropped. With a snarl he straightened himself on his crutches—I forgot to mention he was a cripple—and, quick as a darting snake, struck at my skull with the iron-shod ferrule. I did not even see the next blow but I heard the thud as my trusty negro, Abu Dufada, the "Father of Frogs", struck home and saved my life.

Another religious tramp was an Armenian monk whom I arrested with his baggage and clothes stuffed with packets of *hashish*, the foul drug made from Indian hemp. He had made quite an impression by his fervent piety during the Easter ceremonies, but we had watched him with interest, as he seemed to belong neither to the Armenian Church nor to the Latin Armenian Uniate body, which, while retaining its own rite, liturgy and habit, has submitted to the Pope. He was a little man, venerably bearded, a reverend figure in his black monastic clothes and was lodging at the Greek Orthodox monastery of the "Prison of Christ", which is close to the so-called "Ecce Homo" arch. When I discovered that he was a drug-smuggler I went to his lodgings alone, so as to cause as little scandal as I could, the Greek abbot of the monastery of Christ's Prison being a particular friend of mine. After he had fired two shots at me when I entered his room I found the *hashish*, a lot of it, and arrested him. I took him to the Citadel where I clad him in an old suit of my own, as I had objections to a man, garbed as a Christian monk, sitting in the common cell, where we sometimes had as many as 100 newly-arrested people waiting to be sorted into their categories.

The Armenian Patriarch refused to have anything to do with him, saying that the man had apostatized to Rome many years before; the Latin Patriarch, in his turn, repudiated my prisoner as an excommunicated Uniate priest who had been unfrocked a dozen years before. The ex-monk still had some sense of shame, for he agreed to be tried and accepted his stiff sentence dressed in my reach-me-downs. I took just enough from my share of the

reward money to buy myself a new suit; the rest I sent to Sister Mary Reilly, the Irish Sister of St. Vincent de Paul, who did the begging for their Foundling hospital and orphanage at Bethlehem. I have always detested blood money.

While mentioning this Foundling hospital—my dear Irish nun, Sister Mary Reilly, innocently brought me into grave disrepute and deep suspicion among the mothers and aunts of the British community who visited the Bethlehem hospital as one of their “pet charities”. One day a lady asked the good sister why all the little boys had so unArabic a name as “Douglas” and Sister Mary replied, with a wonderful smile, that they were all foundlings sent in by Mr. Douglas Duff, the officer in charge of the Jerusalem Divisional Police. She also pointed out a number of female infants whom I had sent to her, but the one of whom she was most proud was a small brown babe for whom, she told them, I was paying thirty shillings a month.

That almost scuppered me! Daughters and young sisters were clapped behind the lace curtains whenever I appeared in the neighbourhood. Fond mammas locked them in as soon as the dust of my ancient Ford two-seater rose among the fir trees. My title should have been a variant of Pontius Pilate’s—I ought to have been styled “Procreator of Judea”!

The annoying part of the ridiculous situation was that it was true! I really had sent Sister Mary all those babes and I *was* paying her 150 piastres a month for that small girl infant. The foundlings were left on our barrack doorstep by mothers who wished to be rid of them for, in Palestine, an unmarried mother is usually murdered by her male next-of-kin, providing they can find her. They are logical enough, and just enough, however, to slay the man as well, if they know his identity. Most of our foundlings were only a few hours old and the only way to preserve them was to whisk them off without delay to the Bethlehem orphanage.

I do not know whether it was sheer sentimentality that caused me to have the bratlings brought to my office and there, without my Muslim orderly, or any of my subordinates knowing what was happening, I would use the water from my tumbler to baptize them *in extremis*. I thought that I might as well give the poor, defenceless things the privilege of entering Heaven instead of the vague limbo reserved for the unbaptized; a doctrine which has always struck me as an absurdity. Probably I baptized fifty or sixty of these waifs during my tenure of command in Jerusalem.

Sister Mary Reilly was an adept at wheedling alms, and when she suggested to me, in her inimitable Irish accent, that I was certainly in need of an eternal fire-insurance, I agreed, though I advanced my favourite

doctrine, that the Lord God is a gentleman who understood the peculiar position in which any gentleman in command of Jerusalem was placed. Repudiating my heresy, she protested, charmingly, that thirty shillings a month would support one of the orphans I sent her. I made out a banker's order, for I both loved and liked the dear lady, bless her.

We had a few honest "Messiahs" who had no criminal ideas and sincerely believed that they held a Divine commission. One of the strangest of this crazy brotherhood was a Russian who wished to found a kind of suicide club, much on the lines that Shodkin used in Czar Alexander the Second's time. We soon got on his trail, for he was betrayed by one of the professional converts, people who made a good living out of switching their sects, or even their Faiths, whenever some new fanatic appeared and made them a better offer. Our Russian friend was quite honest and a fervent believer in his own creed and, logically, he died by his own hand—to our intense relief.

One of the many reincarnated John Baptists who pestered us gained a larger following than most. He became a dangerous nuisance, for, as I have already said, our greatest dread was illegal assemblies, from which riots and civil war could spring in a few moments. I had been keeping an eye on this man for some time and had come to the conclusion that he was merely a harmless enthusiast whom overmuch undigested Biblical reading had made crazy.

I warned him about causing a crowd to gather without his having previously obtained a licence to do so, and advised him to return to his own country after refusing his request to be given forty-stripes-less-one as a proof of his persecution by the new conquerors. We bandied a couple of texts ere he departed and for a while he stayed quiet. Unfortunately, some of the very Orthodox rabbis in the Meashorem quarter, a Jewish suburb on the outskirts of Jerusalem, a former ghetto of Ottoman days, complained to me that a false prophet was using the upper end of the Kedron Valley, at the rear of their suburb, as a meeting-place for his disciples, who were mainly their womenfolk. I told a plain-clothes policeman to give me a routine report and forgot about the new prophet for a while. Matters began to grow more serious, however, as his audiences increased until he was preaching to several hundred people at his daily sermon. I called at his lair, a large cave sepulchre, and warned him once more about the serious consequences attending anyone who held a public meeting without first applying for permission. He told me, very humbly, that he was only doing the work of God, which he had been commissioned to perform and intended to complete. I saw that I should have to silence him, for he could cause infinite harm by

inadvertently touching off a tumult which, once started, might end in a general blood-bath.

A couple of days later, Meashorem police post reported that he was preaching to a large crowd on the rough track, which is all that remains of the great Roman military road from Jerusalem to Caesarea that once ran through the Pass of Beth Horon. I took half a dozen armed native police in one of the Ford tenders we had inherited from the Gendarmerie and bumped along the boulder-stewn lane until I sighted him standing, staff in hand, long hair and beard astream in the breeze, on a large grey rock near the Tombs of the Judges.

He looked over the heads of the very considerable crowd, most of whom were Jewish women from nearby Meashorem, saw us coming, and shouted that the Procurator had sent a centurion to carry him away. He exhorted them to watch and pray but not to interfere, for his appointed hour had come.

I am always afraid of a crowd of women who feel they have a grievance, for there is nothing a decent-minded male can do about dispersing them. One cannot lead a charge of mounted police to hurl them all which-ways, and they will seldom listen to reason. I decided that a little tact might save a lot of broken heads, stood up in the truck as we approached the rock on which he was standing, and saluted him very respectfully.

"Master," I began humbly, "I am a man set under authority and what I am told to do that am I bound to perform. The District Commissioner would be glad if you would deign to come with me to discuss certain points regarding the Law of Public Assemblies which you do not appear to understand."

"You are a centurion who has been sent to hale me before the Infidel Procurator," he remarked sadly. "You are a mere tool and you know not what you do; man-made laws do not bind such as I. What happens to me if I decline the invitation to see the Procurator of Judea?"

"Master," I replied, very humbly, while the mob of women stood hostile and vibrantly silent, "I have already told you that I am a man acting under authority and that I must obey orders. If you will not go of your own free will, I must *take* you before the Commissioner."

We bandied a few texts before he consented to enter the truck and we withdrew before too many stones were thrown. Not that the stone-casting was dangerous; women are seldom good marksmen with hand-thrown missiles. The Prophet shouted to his disciples to watch, pray and to fear nothing, assuring them that he would soon return to comfort them, but

when we reached the barracks and I started to question him I grew afraid that I had caused the very calamity which I had been doing my best to avert.

His disciples came swiftly after him; elderly and middle-aged women ran over the rough, boulder-strewn hillsides with their long skirts fluttering, head-shawls streaming, and yelling insults. They poured through the Jaffa Gate within half an hour of our return to the barracks, while I was busy with my interrogation of John, as he persisted in calling himself. Whenever this sort of commotion started in Jerusalem there were always plenty of people ready to fish in troubled waters. Among the crowd of angry women demonstrating in front of our gates demanding the return of their preacher, were plenty of human bazaar-rats, spewed out of their hide-holes in Solomon's Quarries, and all eager to foment serious trouble to give them a chance to loot the shops and hotels.

Rumours flew with incredible speed over the New and Old City that a fracas between Jews and Arabs was in full swing, and the tales grew more fanciful and frightening with every successive minute. The police outposts reported that shutters were going up on the small Jewish shops in the Old City, always one of our storm signals. Unfortunately, my two senior officers were out of Jerusalem on duty and I was in sole charge. I saw disaster looming straight in front of us, and while the "knife-rest" barbed-wire barricades were dragged into position to defend our gates, and Lewis-guns were being taken from the armoury, telephones were humming to the British section, Palestine Police, on Mount Scopus. After John had refused to address the mob and bid his disciples disperse, I knew it could only be a matter of minutes before some Jewish woman in the crowd was knifed, for the number of criminals from the bazaars was increasing every moment. John was a very small man though his lack of stature was offset by a most picturesque head of long hair and a really Messiah-like beard, which made him a most venerable figure. His flowing garments made him remarkably like some of the people pictured in old-fashioned illustrated Bibles, and it was the realization that it was his "props" which made him, that gave me an idea.

I had him taken down to the stables and there, held by four stout Arab troopers, the horse-clipping machine was run over his head and chin, making an instant transformation. A fatuous, weak-chinned face and slack lips appeared in place of the venerable countenance his disciples had revered. He reminded me of a moronistic youth who had been the village idiot of my boyhood home. We stripped off his Biblical garments and once again one of my old suits came in useful. As I am six foot and very

burly, my trousers were a close fit under his armpits, while the skirts of my jacket threshed his ankles. On his head I clapped an aged tweed cap of similar pattern to the suit, making a ludicrous figure of the man which I would have pitied in any less-serious and threatening circumstances.

Outside the barrack gates, in the steep street below the barbican of the Crusaders' Castle of the Pisans (whose main towers are Mariamne and Hippicus, spared by Titus from the palace-castle of Herod), the crowd was becoming very nasty and murder was very close. I pulled John out on the flat roof to one side of the Maingate, where he stood about twenty feet above the street, in full view of the ravening mob of tearful, hysterical disciples, and there, I fear, I approached the blasphemous.

I was fairly well known by this time in the Holy City and when they saw my large figure with the miserable, shrimpish, cowering figure-of-fun I was towing, a sudden hush fell on the mob. I also possess a fore-topsail-yard voice, and I used it to the full.

"Look, you foolish women, is this snivelling ape of an idiot the prophet for whom you wish to sacrifice yourselves? Look well! I have cut his hair and changed his clothes—that is all—he is still your adored Messiah. This is your prophet!" and I held the shrinking little man, clad in his terrible clothes, clear of the roof by the neck of his jacket. "Take a good look at your prophet! Would any of you fancy him to take home and keep as a pet? *Behold the man!*" and I shook him gently, lifting his feet from the ground as I held him up in one hand, while I bellowed my idea of brutal laughter.

With the wind stirring his oversize grey suit, and divested of his hirsute adornments, my little man looked like a scarecrow brought in from a field after a couple of winters' hard service. I stood still, holding him aloft, disregarding his shrieks and his kicking, wondering what the reaction of the mob would be and, as the silence persisted, I began to fear that one of the bazaar-rats, safely hidden in the mob, might drop me with a pistol-shot to precipitate a first-class riot. Then someone deep in the mob echoed my laughter, and within five seconds the whole crowd of erstwhile disciples was roaring with that cruellest, and most animal, noise of which humanity is capable: the scornful, mocking laughter of a mob, repudiating a fallen idol. There is nothing in this world to match it in ferocity or in menace.

Poor Prophet John! Overwhelmed by the roars and squeals of laughter, he fainted in my hands as I held him aloft and I quickly removed him. Ibrahim Bey es Stambouli, that wise old veteran, was watching from below and led a baton charge out of the gates at the crucial moment. Good-humouredly he broke up the meeting, and taking advantage of the occasion

grabbed one notorious absconded offender who had been on our "Wanted" list for many a month. The other bazaar-rats instantly faded away, anxious to be gone ere worse befell them, while the prophet's former disciples, realizing that they had made complete fools of themselves, were only too glad to return home, hating him for being the cause of their making themselves ridiculous.

I released John that evening; there was nothing to be gained by prosecuting him under the law regulating illegal assemblies. He was completely broken, poor little man, his megalomania all drained. He knew that he had been his own deceiver and that there was nothing Divine about the conceit which had upheld him. We found his self-slaughtered corpse the next day, lying in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, where so many people have committed suicide. His epitaph was spoken by my commanding officer, who said, wryly, that he could add one more text to those I had already desecrated, and murmured that again it was "expedient that one man should die for the people"!

Suicides in the Valley of Jehoshaphat were another cause of great anxiety to us, for they were nearly always Jewish victims who killed themselves in this ancient cemetery of their race. The graveyard lies beneath the Temple area, in the deserted valley running towards the Siloam Fountain. The village of Silwan nestles on the rocky slopes of the Mount of Offence, below where Solomon built a palace for his foreign *hareem*. Gethsemane lies at the north end of it, with the tombs of Absalom and Saint James and the traditional stoning-place of St. Stephen the Deacon close by, the Jericho Road dividing the graveyard almost in halves.

One man was a particular nuisance. He called himself Eliezer—I have long forgotten his surname. His speciality was making unsuccessful suicide attempts. On four occasions I was wakened at night by reports that a Jew was dying on the hillside close to the Arab village of Siloam and went there in the cold and wet of winter to find Eliezer lying close to the Tomb of Absalom, writhing from the effects of some poison he had taken. On each occasion we removed him to hospital, where, in due course, he recovered.

Then, one January night, after we had had a larger than usual crop of suicides, as several Jewish girls had been found dead on the grave-mound of a poet who was buried there that summer, I received another alarm that a Jew was dying in the cemetery. It was a terrible night of sleet and some snow, and I hated turning out of my warm quarters to go into the slippery mud and the wildness of the storm howling down the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

I mustered a patrol and started off through the narrow alleys of the Old City, making our exit through St. Stephen's Gate. Thence we slid down the steep lane to the Jericho Road, emerging close to the Tomb of Our Lady. Turning right, we trudged past the Garden of St. Stephen and found one of the Siloam night-watchmen crouched in the lee of Absalom's monument, who told us that a Jew was dying in the Tomb of St. James, above our heads.

This ancient, rock-hewn sepulchre is cut into the face of the low eastern cliff of the valley, through which the Brook Kedron was running in spate as it does only when there is heavy rain. The Tomb of St. James is some feet below the lip of the hill above and at least thirty from the valley bed, altogether a most difficult place to approach even on a fine day armed with ropes and ladders. I heard moanings from the mouth of the square-cut, colonnaded cave and then a voice.

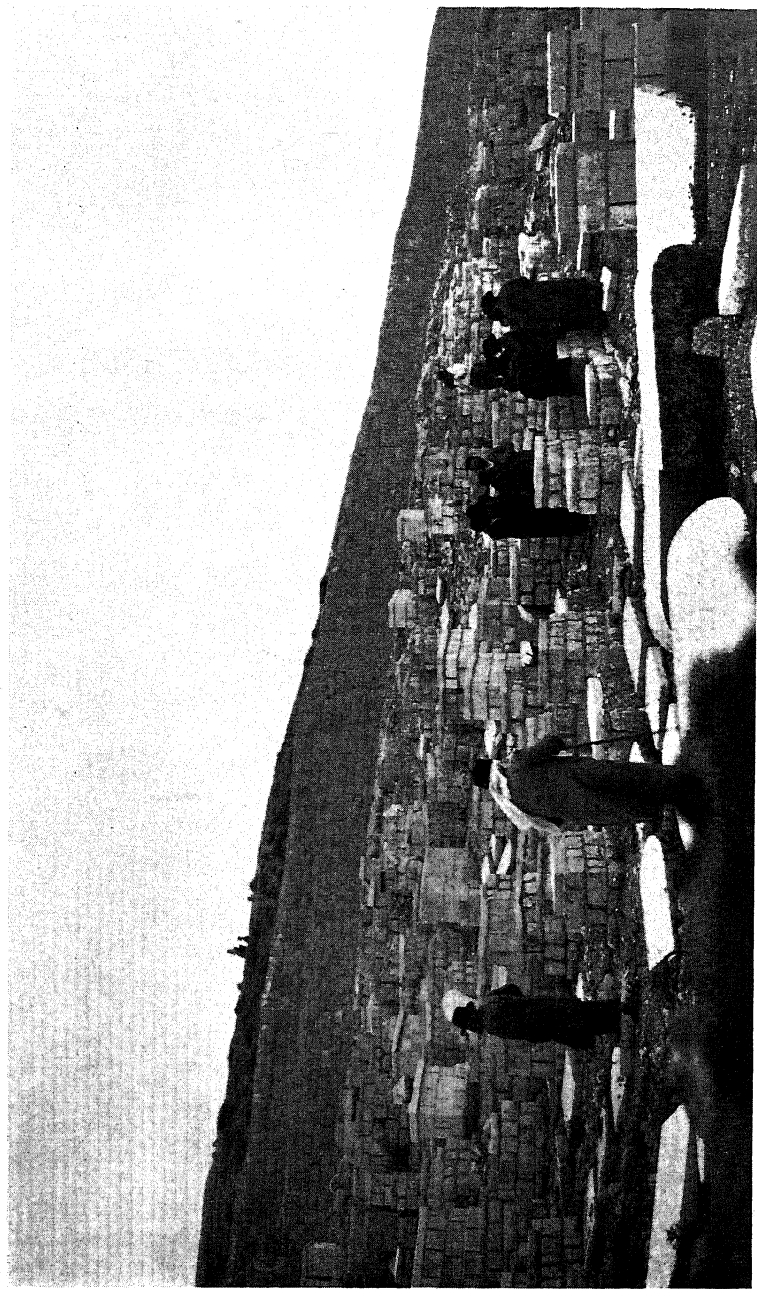
"Duff Effendi," it yelled. "Duff Effendi! It is I, Eliezer. I am dying. Save me. Save me!"

I shouted back to ask him what means he had employed, and he gasped that it was poison, with more appeals to have his life saved. We did our best, but it took us nearly three hours to get ropes and to lower a constable down to the tomb's opening. By then Eliezer's problem had solved itself and we had no more calls to the valley to save his miserable life. The pity was that he was always certified as being sane when we had him examined, and so we had been unable to lock him up for his own protection.

There were no proper asylums for the insane in Palestine in those days; apart from such places as the Monastery of Saint George in the hills west of King Solomon's Pools on the road between Bethlehem and Hebron. They were mediaeval in the extreme, working on the ancient theory of demoniac possession. Their treatment consisted of exorcisms and if they failed, though I saw some extraordinary cases where cures were effected, the wretched lunatic was chained to a wall in the courtyard and left there to see what the Lord God's purpose might be concerning him. Any lunatics who were criminally inclined or dangerous we had to lock up in our prisons, where they lay like sick animals in a cage.

The Jewish cemetery beneath the eastern walls of the Old City was another great cause of anxiety to me, as now and again we received indignant protests from the rabbis that the Arabs had defiled a Jewish grave. In every case the answer to these charges of desecrating the dead was the same; too shallow interments, of which hungry hyenas from their dens on the Mount of Olives hunting for carrion took full advantage.

I was becoming a policeman and the man who made me into one was



Orthodox Jewish cemetery on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives. Below is the Kedron and the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Earth from here is sent all over the world for Jewish funerals



Christmas-eve in Bethlehem. The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem making his entry to the oldest Christian church in the world. On the left are the massive fortifications of the Greek castle-abbey. In rear the minaret of the Moslem mosque

Ibrahim Bey es Stambouli, who had been the senior Arab officer of the Turkish police in the Holy City before Allenby came. He was one of the finest men I have ever known, but he was very much a product of Jerusalem, and I doubt if he could have flourished anywhere else. Both Ibrahim Bey and his eldest son, Faiz Effendi, died in Britain's service as officers of the Palestine Police; the latter killed in action. I knew the older man in his heyday and I loved him. He was about five foot eight and must have weighed 200 pounds—fourteen to fifteen stone—olive-skinned, with a huge, handle-bar moustache, jet black because he dyed it to conceal his real age.

He knew every criminal, crank and racketeer in Jerusalem and its villages. There was not a single criminal trick which he did not understand, and his grip over the Palestinian citizens was something at which to marvel. He was also, in the fashion of Ottoman police officers, a rich man, a fact which he blandly explained by telling the British authorities that he owned a monopoly of the milk supply in the Old City, which was true. In Jerusalem, however, he was worth the whole C.I.D. and a couple of hundred extra constabulary in so far as the Muslim and Christian population were concerned. There was not a single angle of the evergreen disputes in the Holy Places of which he was not aware, and he was a terror to evil-doers and petty thieves in the city and the villages around. One of the most wise things the Mandatory authorities ever did was to retain Ibrahim Bey's services and to keep him stationed in the Holy City. When, alarmed by the *Faşad* directed against him in later years, they transferred Ibrahim Bey to Jenin, a small town in the north, public security in Jerusalem fell to bits in so far as the prevention and detection of crime was concerned.

I loved the old gentleman, but I was not blind to the very unorthodox way in which he did things. His main asset was an immense and widespread local knowledge; such trivial things as finger-prints and criminal psychology simply did not interest him. He knew each criminal's method of doing things, and he could identify any crime from a cursory inspection of the *modus operandi*. I have seen him look at the evidence in some burgled house and say, at once, that Mustafa So-and-So was responsible. Thence we would go straight to the suspect's house, put some more questions—probably a blow or two was given by a sergeant well outside Ibrahim's sound and sight—and usually the loot was brought to light.

Politically he was invaluable, for he knew every move made either by the adherents of Haj Amin el Hussein, the Mufti, or by those in opposition to him. His reports in the *Daily Intelligence Summary* were models of accuracy, and what is more he ruled the Holy City far more

effectively than did the British District Commissioner, for Ibrahim Bey had his own ways of enforcing order, and only too many agents of his own of all degrees of shadiness, eager to execute his commands and so win his patronage. I remember one occasion when one of the vernacular newspapers printed an article accusing Ibrahim Bey of having beaten a young scion of one of the princely Houses, and added that I had stood by and approved the assault. The trouble was that in Government Headquarters there were some clerks whose only work was to prepare a *Daily Return of Extracts from the Press*, which were laid in front of the British heads of departments, who scrutinized them and put down queries and minutes that required answering. In due course I received a copy of the *Daily Extract* with blue-pencilled lines round the part accusing me of assaulting a civilian and I was brusquely asked for an explanation.

It was partly true. The young and wealthy gentleman (he was fifteen) *had* received the father-and-mother of a hiding. He was, by blood, the head of his House, although his uncle, a very well-known and respected personage, acted as regent for him. This youngster was well known for his brutal practical jokes and his sadistical bullying, but as he was always so well protected by his powerful family we could never get the evidence we needed to send him to jail. Not that any such course would have been welcomed by the Palestine Government, with its perpetually delicate negotiations with his powerful uncle. On this occasion our young ruffian had caught an elderly Orthodox Jew while the old man was returning home one night. Leaping on his shoulders, the youth declared that the Jew was his mule and he used the long love-locks hanging down each side of the old man's head as reins. He forced his mount to carry him for a long distance, while his gang of young ruffians whooped and laughed behind, administering kicks and blows to the rabbi.

That was bad enough, but when the old Jew finally halted and said he could go no further, the young Arab noble had *sliced off one of his victim's ears* and threatened to make him eat it! It was at that stage that I arrived, returning home from one of my "rat-hunts" in Solomon's Quarries. I heard the old man's yells, but as I came on the scene the gang melted away into the shadows of the side street.

I had no witnesses and as the complainant, being far too much afraid of what would happen to him if he dared to lay a charge, stated that he had accidentally cut off his own ear and that the young Arab was, and always had been, his particular friend, there was nothing I could do. I lost my temper after that, especially under the sneers of the fifteen-year-old sadist,

whom I had had brought to me and I took him quietly round to the rear of the stables, and thence out into the gardens of the Armenian Patriarchate, where I gave him the best thrashing he had ever had, with my *kurbaj*, a Turkish hide-whip. He swore furious oaths to have my blood for daring to strike him and his gang did, in fact, make one or two attempts to remove me before I shot one twenty-one-year-old professional gunman dead, in an exchange of fire under the dark shadow of the Zion Gate on a full-moon night. After that there was no more trouble.

I had, meanwhile, to reply to the official minute about my brutality to the civilian, and I knew what was involved. The Government would not have the least scruple in using me as a scapegoat if the powerful uncle chose to make trouble. I should be posted away to some remote prison camp, where I could rot from malaria and blackwater fever. I went to see Ibrahim Bey in his office. He agreed that the Governorate could, by quoting all the regulations which lay down how policeman are to behave, make a case against us, but he told me not to worry, for was not his own name coupled with the case? That surprised me until I looked further down and read that stout old Ibrahim Bey had expressed his own opinion of four of the young gangsters with his own *kurbaj*.

He pointed out that the young nobleman was not involved in the newspaper statement; it would be too much against his dignity for the public to know that he had been whipped like a naughty boy. It was his cousin, a briefless lawyer, who was making the trouble, and if I would keep the official "minute" on my desk until I had received, at least, a second "Reminder", Ibrahim Bey thought that he could arrange matters.

That night the lawyer was attacked by a gang of thugs and badly beaten; the next day his car was in collision with a lorry coming from Beersheba loaded with grain, and the lawyer narrowly escaped with his life. Two evenings later his house was burgled and a lot of valuables were taken away. On the same night a gang of brigands from the hills cut the vines of his farm near the Christian village of Bir-es-Zeit to the north of Jerusalem.

On the following afternoon I received a note from HQ saying that there had been a mistake in the *Extracts from the Press* of such-and-such date, alleging irregular conduct against me and one of the senior Palestinian officers of my division. The editor of the paper had published a retraction saying that he had received wrong information and that he regretted so great an inaccuracy in his publication of the news. I never asked Ibrahim Bey what had happened and the lawyer, knowing that I was under the powerful

shield of the old officer, was always most deferential to me thereafter. Ibrahim, a few days later, said piously: "God hates falsehoods, Duff Effendi. You can now see how He struck at this liar. Verily, Allah is great and His ways are beyond our understanding," and his face never so much as twitched while he said it!

We had plenty of dangerous situations. There was one in which an absconded offender turned highway-robber and instituted a reign of terror on the roads in the close proximity of Jerusalem. He was "wanted" on a murder charge, and, in addition, was already "condemned to death in default" (which means that he had been sentenced in his absence), at a trial in which his accomplices were sent to the gallows. Consequently, he was an extremely dangerous man who had nothing to lose but a life which was already forfeit. With the grim fanaticism of the true Muslim he meant to take as many infidel lives as he could before he was killed himself.

He had been arrested, years before, on some comparatively minor charge and was released on a bail of £P200, which he had promptly skipped and left his guarantor to pay. I knew this latter man very well; he had a small grocer's shop and had only stood as bailor because the criminal's friends had threatened him with harm if he refused. We had many absconded offenders, but this man had no particular significance for us until he commenced brigandage on the roads, which culminated in an attack on the car of the Prime Minister of Transjordan, in which a young man lost a leg.

I started off after him that night with a small patrol. A false scent took us to Anata, the ancient Anathoth of the Prophet Jeremiah, but as we were coming back I met two of my Arab mounted men escorting the shopkeeper who had been the brigand's bailor. This man told us that having heard of the recent successful forays, he had been to the robber's lair to ask him to repay the £200 of the forfeited bail, only to receive a savage beating and many insults which had sent him to the police, too angry to fear the possible consequences of his doing so.

He led us to a cave in the mountain-side on the western side of Jerusalem, across the valley through which the main Jaffa road winds down to Kolonia, not far from the village of Lifta. As we came near the cave, stalking it as cautiously as though it had been a wounded tiger's den, a man ran out in the dawnlight shouting: "Come on, you policemen! The old dog is inside. Come and take him."

Before he could say another word a single shot woke the echoes of the barren boulder-strewn mountain-side, and the shouting man fell forward,

shot through the brain from behind by the grim confederate whom he was trying to betray. Then the old wolf's-head settled down to his last fight, and he certainly died like a brave man.

He threw a couple of Mills bombs which bounced down the hillside and landed fairly near us, but as he knew nothing about the delay on the fuses, they burst harmlessly. After that I detached three of my five men to keep up a steady fire on the cave-mouth, hoping to make him keep his head down, while working at an angle along the hillside, I got a good sight of the dark opening. His firing-point was a little way outside the cave-mouth, for the floor projected beyond the roof because of the slope of the mountain-side. He had built a screen of rocks in front of him, leaving a small loophole through which he could shoot in fair safety at my men below.

Sending one trooper for reinforcements, I told another, a gallant fellow from the Transjordan Christian village of Es Salt, to work round the hillside until he was immediately above the cave. The brigand threw three more bombs at us before the trooper, quite unseen by him, got above him. There was a lot of shooting; the rattle of the musketry was thundering in echoes and re-echoes all along the valley, at whose head I could see, in the dawn, the summit of Tel el Ful, Gibeah of Saul, where the Benjaminites were massacred after the ill-treatment of the priest's woman.

It ended very quickly, for the trooper simply leaned over and blew out the brains of the murderer a few feet beneath him. By that time reinforcements under Ibrahim Bey es Stambouli were coming down the goat-track from Lifta village, and he took charge of the funeral arrangements. Inside the cave we found plenty of ammunition, much of the loot of previous robberies, as well as fresh bread and hot food, which proved that the villagers of Lifta had been helping him. I went into the village with my original patrol, paid the usual compliments to the headman, or *mukhtar* as he is called, and also met the Elders, drank some coffee and went to sleep on the quilted beds in the guest-house. My five men did the same.

We were awakened some hours later, and I had another lesson in an Arab police officer's handling of people who had actively helped outlaws. Ibrahim Bey was sitting on a mound of cushions, smoking a water-pipe, using his own ornate silver mouthpiece, and with him was Izhak Effendi el Assali, the officer in charge of the rural division. They had blandly accepted the purely formal Arabic offers of hospitality and said they would appreciate two turkeys for each of the troopers (and there were thirty-six men in all), together with a chicken apiece, with double quantities of turkey for the officers. They also said how glad they would be of the finest cigarettes and

city bread, and then waited, passing pleasantries with their hosts until the whole repast was made ready by the women.

Izhak Effendi el Assali was another hard-bitten veteran of the Turkish police, with a heart as tough as leather and one of the bravest men I have ever known. He proved that fact a score of times against long odds. He possessed also a macabre humour; one morning in January, when the ice was on the Lower Pool of Gihon, I had a report that fourteen Arabs were lying dead in the basement of a new house on the road to the village of St. John in the Mountains, Ain Karem, the site of the Visitation of the Mother of St. John the Baptist by the Blessed Virgin, where a new Jewish suburb was being built. When I arrived I found several of Izhak Effendi's troopers from the rural division busily carrying the corpses from a basement on one side of the road to the cellars of another half-completed building on the other.

I asked Izhak Effendi the meaning of this strange activity.

"This road is the border between our two divisions, Duff Effendi," he grinned. "These dead men were masons from the Jebel Khalil, who sat too close over their charcoal-brazier last night. They forgot to open the windows in the freezing night, so that they died of the poisonous air. As I am very busy just now I hoped that you would not arrive here until I had placed the dead men safely in your area, so that you would have all the nonsense of writing reports and attending the inquest."

We had a third Arab officer, whom we had inherited from the Ottoman days, the most aged of the trio, Ahmet Effendi Sharaf, our Court Inspector, one of the greatest humorists and character actors, this last quite unconsciously, whom I have ever had the honour to know. His favourite pose was to feign an acute physical cowardice, and to pretend that he was afraid of all forms of violence. Yet it was he who surrendered Jerusalem to the armies of Allenby, and I think his account of the event, which I often heard from him, is worth recording before it is lost.

The only enemy troops remaining in the Holy City on the morning of December 9th, 1917, when Allenby's men were making the last stage of their advance up the Jaffa road from Kolonia, were a company of Austrian gunners who mounted guard on the Holy Sepulchre to prevent looting, or desecration, by the last stragglers of the Ottoman armies. In the Holy Sepulchre there are vast treasures. One, which belongs to the Greeks, is housed in the small dome immediately above the Calvary platform and holds upwards of £8,000,000 worth of gold and jewellery, quite apart from the historic value of such relics as the Cross of Palaeologos, the

crowns of the Patriarchs, the jewelled swords of the Czars, many wonderful ancient manuscripts and printed books, the precious needlework of ancient Georgian vestments, and other equally wondrous relics. The Austrians withdrew only when the last of the Ottoman army had passed through the gap to the north and north-east which Allenby's strategy had purposely left open to prevent any fighting in Jerusalem itself.

Ahmet Effendi Sharaf, an Arab, was the senior officer of Turkish police left in the city and he went to the municipal chambers, where he found the Mayor, a member of the princely Husseini family, fresh risen from a sick-bed, debating the best course to pursue. Remember, this was the first time that a Christian army from the West had forcibly taken the Holy City since Godfrey de Bouillon and his men stormed over the walls in July 1099. The memory of that ancient day of blood and massacre was very much in the minds of the city councillors, and a great deal of alarm was being felt at what might happen when the flag of St. George again took the wind over the towers of the Citadel.

It was decided that the Mayor, accompanied by Ahmet Effendi Sharaf, whose uniform would give some dignity to the occasion, should travel down the Jaffa road, taking with them the huge iron key which had once locked the Jaffa Gate, and try to make contact with the infidel advance guard. They started off, riding in an open victoria in the driving rain of the early December morning, two of the councillors having plucked up sufficient courage to accompany the delegation.

In due course they encountered a small patrol of English soldiers, commanded by Sergeant Hurcombe of the Middlesex Regiment, to whom they gladly handed the historic piece of old iron. Ahmet Effendi's recital of his party's actions and fear made a really dramatic scene, a perfect cameo. But the surrender was not allowed to rest there; a mere sergeant was not considered worthy to be the captor of the Holy City. The unfortunate Mayor and Ahmet Effendi were called upon to carry out the Ceremony of the Key several times and always to officers of increasingly higher rank than those to whom they had previously handed it. As a result the sick Mayor took his death of pneumonia, and Ahmet Effendi hinted that he did not feel very well himself after too many handings over of the keys of Jerusalem in the cold and rain.

But what would I not have given to have been in Sergeant Hurcombe of the Middlesex Regiment's place! To have been the Western warrior who had the supreme honour of accepting the surrender of Jerusalem from the Muslim, 730 years after Saladin threw down the Cross banner from the Citadel!

WHEN THE WORLD SHOOK

I WAS twenty-six on July 10th, 1927, and I was lucky not to be a corpse on the following day for, on July 11th, a great earthquake shook Palestine. It was the most frightening experience of my whole life, before and since, despite six wars, three woundings, four ship-sinkings and an escape from a Nazi prison camp in Crete. Frightening, because I felt so nakedly helpless in the presence of a blind force which I could do nothing to withstand.

I was sitting in the tall new building of the Opera Cardinal Ferrari, in the New City, on the afternoon of July 11th, after lunching there with a friend, a most gallant fellow who has now, for close on twenty years, been a Benedictine monk of Buckfastleigh, in Devonshire, though in those days we had not the least reason to suppose that he would ever enter a monastic order. It was about three o'clock when the whole great building trembled, and the strange, terrifying screaming of stones grinding on other stones rose in the new walls of the house. We both ran to the window, which was on the third floor and looked out across the olive groves that then lay between King George V Avenue and the place where the King David Hotel and the Y.M.C.A. building were later built. The ground was moving in a low wave, about a foot or eighteen inches high, which was rolling across it as though it was a lake surface and not solid rock. The ancient gnarled olive trees rose on the crest of the surge, and sank again as soon as it had passed towards the Valley of Jehoshaphat and the grey-golden walls of the Old City, a-shriek in its wild terror, a sound that chilled my blood as I tooted my old Ford along the Mammillah road towards the Jaffa Gate.

I was the only officer in the barracks when I arrived. Close under the city wall we had our lock-up, a huge cell, partly underground, in which we held all newly-arrested prisoners or those whose cases were under investigation. There were almost 100 of them there on that afternoon of earthquake, and among them were some most dangerous men, who later ended on the gallows.

The prisoners were frantic with terror; screaming and fighting among themselves as they tried to force their way through the small steel-barred doorway to the cell, the only exit to the barrack square. I saw the door

quivering as the maddened criminals thrust and pulled with all their frenzied strength against the bars. Overhead the minaret atop the southern tower of the Citadel hung drunkenly askew and would have toppled with any further shocks.

I had to quell that mutiny in the lock-up for, if some of those hardened murderers once escaped, we should have seen a lot of bloodshed before we recaptured, or killed, them. Many of them had already heard witnesses giving statements which could hang them; if they once won clear there would be wholesale killings of many people who knew too much.

I told an Arab inspector to open the armoury and issue rifles to all men in barracks, who were to parade at once in full marching-order. I was wearing a .450 Colts' revolver in my belt-holster, my usual weapon, so I lost no time in taking my old Irish blackthorn shillelagh across to the steel grille behind which the criminals, mad with fear, were shrieking in maniacal terror. Half a dozen Arab constables, led by stout old Sergeant Yussef, followed me, carrying a load of handcuffs and marching-chains. I roared at the inmates that they could take their choice between waiting until we removed them to the safety of the open square, or of being raked with a shower of my pistol bullets to soothe them down until they were prepared to listen to sense.

The whole maddened mob surged forward against the wicket in the middle of the gate. I can still see their writhing, foam-specked mouths and glaring eyes as they burst the stout padlock and sent the bars flying, leaving a space of about forty inches high and perhaps twenty-four wide, the normal entrance to the cell through the wider grille. I dropped the first man stone-cold, with my blackthorn, and brought the next one down on top of his comrade, with a second whack across his skull. Fortunately the two bodies effectually blocked the exit and the others had to shrink back. It was simple enough once those in front had fought back the men in the rear; they came out, under control, were handcuffed by Sergeant Yussef's party and their cuffs secured to the long marching-chain. In five minutes we had a long row of fettered, and orderly, prisoners squatting on the barrack square with riflemen posted on the flat roofs of the surrounding buildings to enforce order.

By this time reports were pouring in from the rural areas, although many telephones had been shattered by the Earth's shaking. I sat down in the guard-room and began to make a summary of the news and to list the places where major casualties were reported. By the time my seniors arrived from their homes in Baka'a the picture was taking shape and small police

parties were being dispatched to organize rescues and prevent looting. The British police, in particular, undertook the duty of preventing plundering by the bazaar-rats and fugitive outlaws hiding in Solomon's Quarries, who could be relied upon to attempt a harvest as soon as their first superstitious terrors were allayed.

A senior officer arrived, and as I had just received a report that the new tourist hotel at Jericho had been destroyed and some eminent visitors were lying beneath its ruins, he told me to go there, organize a rescue and send him a detailed appreciation of what had happened in the Jericho area.

The drive from Jerusalem to Jericho was fearsome. On two sections of the road between Tala'at ed Damm, the "Hill of Blood", just below the Inn of the Good Samaritan, and the floor of the Jordan Valley, whole sections of the road fell off the cliff behind me and crashed into the chasms as they were displaced by the wheels of my car.

Things were bad in the little town of Jericho. The barracks, which once had been a Russian Czarist hospice for pilgrims, was badly cracked; the Monastery of St. John at the Bethabara ford of the Jordan looked as though it had been hit with a giant sword, for the whole middle of it had collapsed. The Jordan itself had ceased to flow south of the Allenby Bridge, and the new hotel, only just completed, a mile up the road and almost at the roots of the mound marking Joshua's Jericho, had fallen on to some important tourists. The mud houses of the town itself seemed little the worse, and there were no casualties among the inhabitants.

When I reached the hotel I found a deeply distressed Indian, a retired Justice of the Supreme Court, a K.C.I.E., with a friend of his who had been sharing their tour, an hysterical Greek hotel-keeper, and a crowd of Jericho men and mulatto-Bedouin from the plain agog to make a profit for themselves out of the disaster. At the moment of my arrival they were haggling with the Muslim Indian knight for the price of their starting rescue work on the jumbled ruins, refusing to labour at all until they received every penny he could pay.

Unfortunately he had a leather shoulder-satchel, literally stuffed with gold sovereigns, which he had been brandishing in his efforts to get these people to commence work. The result was as might be expected: the Jericho men had not the least intention of commencing digging until they had obtained all the gold, whereupon most of them would have quietly faded away. I went straight to work with my *kurbaj*, although my troopers had not yet appeared up the long, dusty, tree-lined road leading from the town.

The Bedouin and villagers yelled and screamed and tried to get away,

but the lower walls of the building were still standing and they were caught in the courtyard, with my angry figure blocking the gate. They cringed and whined but won no surcease from my blows until they grabbed the mattocks and spades which they had brought with them and restarted work on the mound of rubble. I heard the poor old gentleman's story; his wife, her companion and his friend's wife had all sat down to their meal in privacy, not wishing to expose themselves to the two husbands, who ate in a different room to maintain the *purdah* of each other's wife. When the earthquake brought down the house the worse damage was done in the wing where the ladies were eating; the men had escaped without injury.

The heat was intense, while the rivulet from Ain es Sultan was running red, looking like blood because of the ruddy clay that had been shaken into it. I impounded the hotel's store of Evian water and threatened the proprietor when he demanded payment for the bottles the sweating men drank. That stopped work as the Arabs argued, and with the time that had elapsed since the ladies were buried I was desperate to get as much done as quickly as possible—or even faster. I spent weeks afterwards answering official letters from Government Headquarters about that Evian water! Finally I had to pay for it out of my own pocket.

I persuaded the Indian knight to close his satchel and to offer 100 sovereigns for the ladies if they were brought out alive, fifty if they were found dead. That spurred the Arabs, but they stopped quickly enough when the knight, in his agony, threw a handful of golden coins on to the rubble in the hope of making the diggers work the faster. They promptly broke off and scrambled for the money, daggers flashing as they disputed some piece which one or other of them had snatched. I jumped in with my *kurbaj* flailing, and drove them back to their task. By good luck my Arab troopers clattered up at this moment, halting in a swirl of dust, for some of the Bedouin were turning nasty at my coming between them and the gold.

After an hour or so of terrible labour, during which we moved many tons of rubble, beams and planking, one of the Bedouin straightened his back and yelled that it was a waste of time to dig any more as the women must be dead. Why should they trouble themselves to dig out corpses, even if there was fifty sovereigns as reward?

I was sweating, dirty and very hot, for I had been digging as hard as any of them, but I dropped my mattock, roaring that only Allah above could say whether the women were dead or alive. The tribesman, who was a giant for a Bedouin, grinned evilly and said that he was going home, having done more work than he normally did in the whole year. If I had allowed him to

depart the other diggers would have followed him, so I hit him with a beautiful left uppercut to his bearded face and sank a right-cross to his heart, which dropped him flat on his back atop the powdered rubble. Before he had time to recover I ordered the stout old sergeant, one of the doughty Areikhat clan, to trice the prostrate Bedouin to the woven-wire fence of the tennis-court and lay on a dozen lashes with his *kurbaj*.

Ten minutes later we found the first body, the knight's wife. He ran towards me as I freed her from the dust and the fallen masonry. He fell prone beside her, his eyes streaming with tears.

"Please carry her yourself, British officer," he begged, looking at me. "Carry her, sir, for I do not want her to be touched by any of these common men. Cover her face. She would be grieved if she knew that her features were exposed to the mob when she could no longer protect herself."

I have seen many tragedies before and since that afternoon in Jericho, but I have never felt worse than I did while I carried that poor, dusty, crumpled, shattered body of an old Indian woman to the shelter of the bougainvillaea-covered summer-house in the hotel garden. After a little while we recovered the two other bodies, and to my infinite relief Mrs. Reynolds, the kindly wife of the popular headmaster of St. George's School, which is part of the Anglican Cathedral in Jerusalem, who was on her way home from Transjordan, arrived and took charge of the dead women.

I reported the situation to Jerusalem and drove down to look at the Jordan, which was dry from some miles north of the bridge all the way to the Dead Sea because the high marl banks had crashed into the stream and formed a dam. I amused myself by walking across the bed of Jordan dryshod, and took several stones from the mud, with which I built a small cairn as a memorial of that crossing of the sacred river.

I received orders to return to Jerusalem by leading my patrol on foot through the mountains by way of Ain Djuk, which lies just beside the Mount of Temptation, to whose cliffs the ancient Greek monastery clings like a swallow's nest. The monks were safe, though badly frightened, and were glad that their Eternal Flame, which they claim has burned continuously since the first Christian century, was still alight.

We reached Michmash, passing up the valley across which Jonathan, the son of Saul, led his patrol to seize the little piece of land atop the rock. There we recovered sixteen corpses from the ruins of the stone-built houses and rendered first-aid to the injured, the first help they had received since the cataclysm. We found a few more casualties at Bethel, Beitin as it is called nowadays. I broke off a piece of the local Bethel rock, on Lord

Lascelles' order, a year later, which he wished to compare with the Stone of Scone. In Bireh and Ramallah we found more dead and injured, to whom we attended before we headed back for Jerusalem.

The Holy City escaped comparatively lightly in human lives lost, but over 400 buildings were shattered and among them were the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre and Government House, astride the ridge of a spur of the Mount of Olives. Fortunately the Field Marshal and Lady Plumer were in Britain on leave, but one of their Russian women servants was killed by falling masonry from the tower while she was hanging out some washing on a flat part of the roof. Holy Sepulchre has never recovered from that shaking of July 11th, 1927; during the years of neglect since it has been reduced to the shored-up wreck which our Servicemen who visited it during the Second World War will remember.

The Palestine Government made a half-hearted endeavour to make the venerable place safe, but drew back, alarmed, when it encountered the jealousies of the Churches who share its ownership. Most of the original damage was done to the smaller dome over the Greek Catholicon, but that Church strenuously resisted all attempts by anyone else to effect the repairs, for which it could not afford to pay. There was a Turkish law still extant by which anyone who repaired the roof of a damaged building could claim its ownership. Consequently, Holy Sepulchre has mouldered more sadly every year, despite such temporary expedients as the binding of the ruined dome with a steel chain, until today it is so unsafe for people to enter it that most of the great ceremonies are no longer attended.

I was sent to Nablus, the city between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, where the earthquake had wreaked the worst havoc. There were still a lot of dead lying beneath the rubble when I arrived to help the dog-weary British officers of police to salvage what we could, and to prevent looting. The latter was the more difficult, as several streets of shops in the bazaar had been ruined. The first shock of the earthquake had been just strong enough to send the merchants and shopkeepers shrieking from their open-fronted shops. Then there was a short interval, during which many of them ran back to recover their cash and portable valuables, but the second, and mightier, blow a couple of minutes later, buried many of the venturesome shopkeepers beneath their fallen premises. That was where our task lay, for the looters were very clever and possessed plenty of nerve. We worked hard to recover the bodies, needing only our noses for the gruesome business, and found large sums in notes and coin on many of them.

On my third night in Nablus, while I was patrolling the bazaars looking

for looters, I saw a man who ran out of a shattered shop only a few yards down the moonlit street in front of me. I yelled at him to halt, and when he carried on running I fired two shots after him. A second or so later a large piece of masonry, which had been dangling from a second-floor above, came crashing down, burying the fugitive!

He was quite dead when we picked him out of the dirt and dust, but there were no bullet holes in him—it was the masonry dislodged by the detonation which had ended his thieving career.

There was much earthquake damage in many parts of Palestine; the severest was at Reneh, half-way between Nazareth and Cana of Galilee, where the entire village was wiped out. The few remaining walls of Tiberias and its black castle suffered some further ruin, but Mount Tabor's new Basilica of the Transfiguration fortunately settled down without harm to itself after waving like a flag in the breeze.

I have described some of the highlights of police work in Jerusalem, but we had the normal routine duties of the prevention and detection of ordinary crime always with us. Burglaries, arson, embezzlement, rapes, assaults, pilfering, murders, traffic offences, and all the rest of such matters needed attention in the Holy City just as much, or more, as in any other town.

Our main sources of information were prostitutes and public-hire drivers, both of horse-drawn victorias and of motors. Each of the latter knew that, if he did not report any suspicious occurrences in his vehicle, he was due for a lot of trouble, Ibrahim Bey saw to that. But, as time went on, political matters began to cause us a lot of anxiety; especially on May Day, when our infant Communist Party often made trouble. The Labour Party usually held a public meeting on the Jaffa road outside the Zion Cinema, which often degenerated into a disorderly crowd waving the red flags which were strictly forbidden. My orders from Headquarters were to remove the banners at all costs.

The embarrassing thing was that most of the flags were taken to the meeting by girls, who wore them wrapped round their bodies under their skirts and only produced them at the prearranged signal. I have a constitutional dislike of inflicting violence on women. On the first occasion that I was in charge of the May Day police arrangements a score of red flags were produced at the back of the crowd and I forced my big chestnut stallion (all our horses were entires) into the mob, hoping to persuade the Jewish girls who were carrying them to be reasonable.

The young women stood silent for a moment until they realized that

I was not going to offer them any violence. Then they laughed in that sardonic, sarcastic, half-merry fashion in which women always do laugh at a man whom they know they have stymied by their innate femininity. One of the younger, and prettier, girls suddenly gave an order, whereupon every one of her followers produced balls of dried horse-dung and pelted me with them.

I have never felt such an utter and helpless fool in my life; I do not quite know what I should have done, for I feared to lose control of the vast male majority of the mob by being made into an Aunt Sally. I was saved by a young Jewish officer who had none of my own anachronistic ideas of chivalry. He yelled the order to charge and led his dozen mounted men straight into the mob with pick-shafts flailing. I am glad that the crowd broke before he reached the girls and picked up the scraps of red flags left bedraggled in the dust.

There were far more serious Jewish troubles. On one occasion vast protest meetings against the Kingdom of Rumania were called in the New City and, despite a strict police ban, large crowds gathered to hold a memorial to some Jewish students who, it was alleged, had been victims of a pogrom in Bucharest. I received strict orders to disperse the crowds, and, hearing that the largest mob was demonstrating outside the Zion Cinema, I galloped to the scene with about twenty native troopers at my horse's heels.

The crowd was very ugly and turned much uglier when they saw us. Some stones and bottles were thrown amid much shouting. We endured this until revolvers appeared, whereupon I ordered my bugler to sound-off, as was required by the Ottoman law, before taking sterner measures. The crowd was told three times, in Hebrew, to disperse quietly, and on each occasion the bugle was blown to draw attention to the command. The proclamation only made the crowd angrier and, seeing the small handful of mounted men at my back, they came rolling towards us, perhaps 5000 strong. The only effective thing I could do was to counter-charge, and so, giving the order, I rowelled my stallion and went bald-headed at the mob, riding as point with my troopers, boot-to-boot, in a solid wedge behind me.

Regulations laid down that I should have remained watching so as to keep control of my men, but without the leadership of a British officer, the Palestinian horsemen would not have faced that raving crowd. We went through them like a warm knife through a pound of butter, re-formed in their rear, charged straight back and the panic-stricken mob fled in all directions down every side-road, street and alleyway. A messenger came

spurring up to me, a few seconds after I had halted, to say that there was another crowd near what was then the post-office (this was long before the big modern buildings were erected on what was the Municipal Garden).

With the slope of the hill behind us we took that crowd in the rear, but they were too tightly massed to break quickly, and there was a danger of my men being torn from their saddles as bodies slowed the impetus of our charge. We were saved by a couple of Ford tenders, filled with armed and steel-helmeted British constables, which came roaring up the hill from Damascus Gate to outflank the mob. Meanwhile I got word that another, and more dangerous, crowd was attacking the Rumanian Consulate-General, close by the Jaffa Gate. This mob had come up the Mammillah road, screaming death to the Consul-General. I handed over to an inspector of the British police, my old friend Jock of Gendarmerie days, and went at the gallop down the 300 yards to the Consulate, with only my orderly at my back.

The mob was far too closely packed for me to get through it on horse-back; I should have been torn from my saddle and trampled to death if I had tried. I threw my reins to my mounted orderly and pushed my way through the milling crowd on foot, quickly reaching the doorway of the Consulate, which stood at the head of a flight of eight-foot-wide marble stairs on the floor above the offices of the *Crédit Lyonnais*. I snatched a stone-cracking hammer from an Arab workman, who was crouching against the wall hoping to remain unnoticed. Ibrahim Bey joined me as I reached the bottom step; he had forced his way along the wide pavement from the Jaffa Gate, fifty yards away. Every hair in his handle-bar moustache was bristling and in his hands he held a tyre-lever.

Shoulder-to-shoulder we rushed up the stairs, while the mob, astonished at seeing two officers in uniform appear apparently from nowhere, hung back, uncertain what to do. We found the Consul-General, who begged us to save him and said that his staff had fled. Ibrahim Bey, stout old warrior, soon had a complete grip on the situation and invited me to take the right side of the staircase while he guarded the left.

The yelling mob were waiting only for a leader, as all packs and herds always do. Those in the rear pushed forward, while the foremost, their front shortened by the width of the doorway, were pushed irresistibly on to the bottom steps. The crucial moment came when one of the leaders, a burly young man, yelled to his mates to follow him and came bounding up the blue-white marble stairs two steps at a time. I still recall having the incongruous thought that Ibrahim Bey and I made a strange pair of Umslopogaases,

or Horatius Cocles, as we stood there watching him, while the rest of his comrades hung back, waiting, instinctively, for the moment when, their leader having proved himself, they would surge up at us like a rising flood.

Ibrahim Bey spoke without turning his head, very quietly, his eyes measuring the young man. "Take him from the right, Effendi. I'll attend to his left."

The burly man, clad in faded khaki drill shorts, sandals and a white open-necked shirt, his curly head of fair hair down-bent like that of a charging bull, rushed up at us yelling in a high, strange note. I need not stress our danger, for the hundreds of rioters would have been completely unstoppable if he had got through, or even entangled us in a struggle. I hit him with my hammer, just above the ear, while Ibrahim Bey's tyre-lever was not a tenth of a second behind me as he struck home on the other side of the leader's skull. The unfortunate man fell without a struggle; slowly, but with swiftly-gathering speed his body rolled down the stone steps until it was stopped by the front ranks of the mob.

Ibrahim Bey seized the critical instant. "At them, Duff Effendi!" he roared and, bawling like a bull of Bashan, swinging his tyre-lever, looking prodigiously formidable and fierce, he charged down the stairs. I was a step in his rear, brandishing my hammer and roaring as fiercely as he. We struck that horrified front rank like the wrath of the gods, smiting in all directions, just as a charge of mounted police, wheeling out of the Jaffa Gate, stung the flank of the mob and broke it into fragments.

The aftermath came some months later when Ibrahim Bey and I were awarded the Order of the Crown of Rumania, for which, in the absence of my two seniors, I had solemnly recommended ourselves as a joke, with no idea that anyone would take me seriously.

Foreign decorations were easily obtainable in those days. I received the Order of the Crown of Italy after a fracas in the Holy Sepulchre in which I grabbed an Arab who wished to stab the then Crown Prince of Italy, Umberto, during one of the great ceremonies. As His Royal Highness came abreast of the Stone of Uncion I caught the glimmer of a knife being drawn by a man in the third row of the watching crowd.

I seized him as he threw himself at the Crown Prince, but as I did so the point of his dagger tore my cheek just above the jaw-bone. I bled like a stuck pig but in the excitement the crowd was too intent on the gorgeous spectacle passing in front of them to realize what I was doing, though I saw the Crown Prince clap his hand to his sword-hilt when the man first

jumped forward. I caught his eye as I grabbed the would-be assassin, but the Prince's face was imperturbable, for he wished, just as much as I did, to avoid any incident that could have world-wide repercussions. Because of this we charged the dagger-man only with causing grievous bodily harm to a police officer in the execution of his duty and made no official mention of his real intentions.

The honour I most greatly prized was the Knighthood of the Venerable Order of the Holy Sepulchre, which was bestowed on me by the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, *in pectoris*, without official record, as I was then a serving officer of the Palestine Government. I watched over the sword, spurs and chain of Godfrey de Bouillon throughout the previous night in the Holy Sepulchre, and in the morning I was dubbed knight by the Patriarch, receiving the accolade from the sword of Godfrey de Bouillon, which is kept in the Franciscan sacristy. What fired my soul most was the Order's tradition of having been pledged to maintain the peace within the Holy Places during the earliest days of the Crusading kingdom. That ceremony, in the ancient church for which millions have fought and died, is a great highlight of my life, and I trust that when I am buried my body will be wrapped in the white mantle with the five red crosses on its shoulder that I received that day.

Meanwhile I had had a full share of my tourist-guide activities for Government House guests, culminating in being detailed to act as Orderly Officer for the Princess Royal (Her Royal Highness Princess Mary, Viscountess Lascelles, as she then was), who stayed in Jerusalem with her husband, the late Lord Lascelles, his sister, Lady Boyne, and her husband. I enjoyed every minute of the journeys we made all over the Holy Land, for Lord Lascelles, who was extremely well-read on the subject, after being a little sceptical at first about some of my identifications of the various ancient or sacred sites, became interested when he found that I was supported by the best authorities.

After the usual round of inspecting maternity hospitals, girls' high schools, social centres and bun-fights, Lord Plumer sent for me one morning. I was in full dress, complete with sword and medals, and feeling very hot and uncomfortable as I clanked into the High Commissioner's private quarters. He was in the khaki service dress of a Field Marshal, with his monocle dangling as usual at the end of a black lanyard. His head reached the top button of my tunic as I stood rigidly to attention.

One of his mannerisms was a titter, which always sounded most strange from the justly famous soldier.

"I asked Her Royal Highness what has most struck her during her tour, Duff," he said, screwing the monocle into his eye.

I stood stiff as a ramrod, wiping all expression from my face.

"Do you know what she replied?" he queried and tittered. As he did so the monocle fell with abrupt speed, and I expected to hear it splinter on the tiled floor. Fortunately it was stopped by its black cord, bounced a bit and became still.

"No, sir," I replied woodenly.

He rammed his finger into the region of the fourth silver button on my tunic.

"Tee-hee, Mr. Duff," he tittered again, though still looking his usual soldierly self. "*Mr. Duff*, that is what she said in answer to my question. Very gratifying, Duff."

I made some sort of gurgling acquiescence and stood very still. Then he changed his tone and barked at me.

"You are to go to England, Duff."

I saluted, clicked my heels with a satisfying jangle from the box spurs on my half-wellingtons, made a clattering about-turn and started to march towards the door, letting my scabbard-tip scrape along the tiles.

"Where *do* you think you are going?" came a bark from behind me.

I halted elaborately, turned about, saluted and replied, "England, sir."

"You fool," he said tartly, but I saw the smile behind the walrus moustache. "You are to return home with Her Royal Highness and her party. You will receive your orders in due course. Understand?"

"Perfectly, sir," I answered, and went through the same pantomime of military pomp as I walked out to wait in the ante-room for the start of the day's sightseeing.

Go home with the Royal party I did, and I thoroughly enjoyed myself. We sailed from Kantara in the P. & O. liner *Ranchi*, Captain Brookes her commander. I was ordered to go to the Royal Ulster Constabulary Depot at Newtownards, near Belfast, there to be trained as a policeman, the first officer of the Palestine police to be sent on this course.

I hated every day of it. It was my first leave in Britain in over six years and I could think of many better ways of spending it than by going through hours of learning squad and arms drill by numbers, alongside raw recruits. Some of the technical subjects were very interesting, such as finger-prints and police administration. Criminal psychology, too, was of use, although as it was taught at Newtownards it had very little bearing on our problems in the Holy Land. I was allowed to watch a murder case from start to finish.

Some wretched farm-labourer, I think his name was Smiley, had shot dead his employer's wife and another woman. He was duly sentenced to death and executed. I saw him while he was in Belfast prison awaiting trial and, later, in the condemned cell, but his case was a simple one compared with many we had in the Holy Land, and the British legal procedure had little similarity to ours in the Palestine police.

I declined an invitation to attend the man's execution, for I had been present at too many of them in Jerusalem, and as the method was exactly the same in both countries I saw no reason for distressing myself by seeing a white man die. In all I reckoned that, in the four months I was at Newtownards, I learned as much as I might easily have "hoisted in" with about a week's instructions, if all the trimmings had been shorn away. It was a good course for a colonial police cadet on his first appointment, but to one who had seen some years of service it was merely irritating. I returned to Palestine with a feeling of regret at having wasted a perfectly good leave. I believe that the report from the R.U.C. Depot mentioned this conviction of mine—a thing which did not in the least amuse my Inspector-General in Jerusalem.

SOLOMON'S WALLS AND DAVID'S CITY

WHEN I returned to Jerusalem, after my twenty-two weeks in England, I saw things with more objective eyes than I had before going on leave.

Those six years since April 1922, when the *City of Oxford* anchored in Haifa Roads, had completely changed the Holy Land. During them we lost, irrevocably, the fine opportunities we had once possessed of making Palestine into a friendly and co-operative part of the British Commonwealth. There was neither love nor trust of Britain left among the native Palestinians, who had been transformed into "Arabs", a name they would have bitterly resented when the Mandate was young. Even the local *Christians* had become "Arabs"! The younger generation, who had been lads of fifteen and sixteen when Allenby walked through the Jaffa Gate, were grown men full of an enthusiasm made all the stronger because they had only the haziest memories of Ottoman days. Most important of all, these youngsters had learned to read and write. Haj Amin el Husseini, the Mufti, and his agents had succeeded in making the Palestinian, who is only "Arab" in his language and religion (just as his lineal ancestors were Greek-speaking and Christian for centuries, or Aramaic-speaking and quasi-idolators for even more), into "Arabs" who saw a modern country growing around them, for the Jewish immigrants brought new ways of living and of agriculture. They saw, also, that the Muslim dominance of the centuries was gone.

Jewish colonization made great strides in those six years. In 1922 there was only one small village, Kefr Tavor, and one farmhouse, Tel Joseph, on the whole vast Plain of Armageddon, yet in 1928 there were big and growing townships such as Nahalal, Afuleh, Ain Harod and many others.

I had seen Nahalal while it was being founded by a few men and women who pitched their tents about two miles to the north-east, and on the other side of the road from where it stands today. Afuleh, the market town for the whole region, was, in 1922, naught but four small mud-walled granaries standing on a low knoll covering a long-forgotten Hebrew town of Biblical days. The coming of the Jews was very plainly visible everywhere. Tel Aviv was no longer a mere suburb of half a dozen mean streets among the dunes north of Jaffa, but a city.

Another, and most significant, change was taking place, for the immigrant Jews were no longer the meek pacifists whom the native Palestinians had known for so long. Not that the Jews were belligerent; they went to the greatest pains to live in peace with their neighbours, but they were not the ringleted, long-bearded, orthodox Talmudic students who offered their throats unresistingly to the Muslim skinning-knife and died without a struggle. These hardy young men and women newcomers were sturdy pioneers who had known all the horrors of persecution and pogroms in Eastern Europe and, having reached the Land of their Ancestors, were determined to stay in it as self-respecting farmers, ready to fight if they were forced into a corner from which there was no honourable escape. These highly intellectual people voluntarily made themselves into a peasantry, but into an intelligent and a cultured peasantry. They realized that Jewry possessed every kind of profession and trade except that of the yeoman farmer, and this they set themselves out to become. Not all, of course; many of the immigrants shirked the toil of the sun-smitten farms and preferred clerical jobs, or small trading businesses in the cities, especially in Tel Aviv.

We officers in the Palestine Police felt the long-quiet volcano heaving beneath our feet, and we wrote endless reports pointing out that we had not sufficient strength to keep the vent closed for ever, unless we were given more weight to do it. Our reports were disregarded; some of us were told, very quietly, that there was always the chance of a few officers being considered "redundant" in the next Treasury "retrenchment". Our strength remained at 1800-odd native police, supported by 120 British Section "other ranks".

Whitehall was happy; they were running Palestine on a shoe-string, and even that shoe-string was being paid for almost entirely out of local taxation. The incoming Jews paid most; the Revenue depended on the duties imposed on agricultural machinery and the other things which the Zionists brought with them. The budget balanced and the Secretary of State for the Colonies could blandly parry any awkward questions put to him in the House of Commons.

1928 was high-noon for our British Mandate; we never again reached its peak of serenity, authority and seeming-prosperity. Few of the British senior officials in Jerusalem seemed to realize how hollow was the situation behind the lath-and-plaster façade which looked so much like a strong and contented fortress. We police officers did; we were about the only ones, except for some of the very best men in the District Administration, who

knew anything, at first-hand, about what was happening behind that glittering frontispiece which so impressed the visiting tourist and pilgrim with the might and dignity of Great Britain as the Heir of the Crusaders.

Lord Plumer left us in what looked like bright sunshine, and Sir John Chancellor succeeded him in Pontius Pilate's seat, but the borders were no longer tight and secure and the police were not the same restraining force they once had been. The reason for our decline was the institution of Western ideas about the composition of our training and functions. Up to this time we had had a high proportion of the rough and fearless veterans who had once served in the Ottoman police or had been members of raiding bands of Bedouin. We had many men in our ranks from the Transjordanian tribes, as well as Kurds, Mettwallis, Druzes and a few tough Sudanese, all imbued with the old Turkish idea that a policeman was a being apart, the representative of government, and that the wearing of King George's coat set him above all humbler mortals.

A regulation was issued, and enforced, that all our native policemen must be literates; that they must qualify under set examinations, and that all who could not "make the grade" must be discharged! At one stroke we lost our greatest asset, the old mounted warriors who, backed by the British officers, had held Palestine quiet. In their place we received pimply-faced youths from the training school, many of whom had sat their examinations with only one purpose: to enjoy the prestige and privileges of the old-fashioned trooper and to extort far more *bakhsheesh* than the simple older warriors had ever demanded. The mountaineers and the tribesmen grinned wolfishly when they saw these city men set out on horseback and the still-poorer types who were allowed to join the Foot police. The old wolves'-heads dug out the rifles which had lain buried so long and our murder statistics mounted. Brigandage quickly became rampant; the highway robbers were no longer afraid to attack British passengers on the roads, as they would not have dared to do a few years earlier. Small Jewish colonies were sniped sporadically until they paid "protection money" to the nearby villagers and, except near the big towns, real respect for law and order almost ceased to exist.

We had some bad cases, where all native Palestine believed, rightly or wrongly, that innocent men were executed. One of these was the outcome of a highway robbery in the Wadi Haramiyeh, on the Jerusalem-Nablus road, during which Dr. MacInnes, the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem, was held up. He was the hero of the occasion, for he dauntlessly faced the robbers,

who had placed a stone barrier across the road at the bottom of the deep valley near the twenty-ninth kilometre stone. When the three highwaymen, dressed in hill-country garments, finally fled after stopping several other cars, the Bishop's chauffeur lay dead and an American lady, a Mrs. Pettit, had received a bullet through the throat.

I, personally, saw a deal of the beating and "third degree" that was endured by many dozens of people in the hill villages near the scene of the crime, and I am not holding up my hands in shocked protest, for I witnessed hundreds of bastinadoings during my years in the Palestine police and many scores of cases where the "Hoist", or the "water-can", was employed. This latter method had the merit, from the investigators' viewpoint, of leaving no traces for doctors to detect. The victim was held down, flat on his back, while a thin-spouted coffee-pot poured a trickle of water up his nose, while his head was clamped immovably between cushions that left no marks of bruising. It is not pleasant to talk about and even unpleasant to admit having witnessed. Usually, we British officers remained discreetly in the background, not wishing to have the skirts of our garments soiled, but we were ready to benefit by information wrung by our subordinates from the wretched suspects or criminals.

Three men of a hill-top village near the scene of the hold-up were tried and sentenced to death on evidence which left the accused no chance to escape, nor the judges any reason to doubt their guilt.

Nevertheless, most of the British police officers believed that the doomed men were innocent, because we suspected that the hold-up of the Bishop was not the work of local criminals. The doomed trio lived in the village immediately above the scene of the crime and to stage it so close to home was something that I never knew an Arab to do, for fear of collective fines often imposed on the neighbourhood of some particularly notorious crime and because of the inevitable unpleasantness. A week after the men were hanged in Jerusalem Central Prison some of the loot taken in the hold-up was found in the possession of some well-known ruffians of Abu Dis village, miles away!

A second case was that of a Nablus man who had been condemned to death, had had his appeal rejected and who would have been executed the following morning if that very night one of the principal witnesses for the prosecution had not been knocked down by a car. He confessed, as he died, that the whole case had been rigged, with all the evidence carefully rehearsed, by relatives of the doomed man who coveted some property he owned. I met a saint that early morning, for I heard the Arab, awaiting his

end on our scaffold, refuse to take any steps against the liars who had thrust his neck into the noose.

"God is the only Judge," he said, when we told him he would be set free as soon as the necessary formalities were completed. "He alone will punish or pardon my enemies as He thinks fit. A man's fate is written on his forehead, and it was mine that I should have gone so close to the Gates of Paradise."

The case received the widest official publicity, but instead of impressing the Arabs, as it was meant to do, with the care taken to find the truth by British justice, it had the reverse effect. The people shrugged and said that God Himself had saved the man's life at the last moment, despite the bunglings of the Government.

Shortly after my return to Palestine I became entangled in what has since been called "The Wailing Wall Incident". It was my bad luck that I became the central figure in the biggest Arab-Jewish controversy of the early years. It happened on the Day of Atonement, the great Jewish festival of Yom Kippur, 1928.

I accidentally met the British District Commissioner near the Holy Sepulchre that evening and he invited me to accompany him down to the Temple area, where he proposed to visit some of the religious sheikhs. We walked slowly down David Street, which runs from the Jaffa Gate, downhill, across the filled-in Tyropean Valley, to the Gate of the Chain, leading in to the Temple area. Immediately to the right of this Gate is the old *Mekhamme Sharia*, the Muslim religious court, where matters of dowries, wards, wills, religious and charitable endowments and all questions of divorce are tried by doctors learned in the Islamic canons. There we were met by several of the venerable sheikhs, clad in well-brushed, black cassock-like garments, their red fezzes bound with snowy turbans.

We walked into the Sharia court with them, where the District Commissioner, glancing out of the tall window, studied the Jewish throng at the Wailing Wall, a few yards beneath us. The enclosure was filled with worshippers, who kept coming and going as they always did in this great festival. The time was about four in the afternoon, which it is important to remember, as the great Jewish feast started at sunset that evening. I had noticed during one of my visits to the Wall earlier that day that an ordinary bedroom screen was standing about one-third of the way along the flagstones. In my ignorance I failed to grasp its significance, and, as no one made any complaints about it, I did not suspect that bane of the Holy Places—an Innovation! Real or fancied innovations, planned to establish a precedent

and sternly resisted by the opponents of the innovators, caused most of our fights in the Sacred Shrines, and usually I was very quick to note any.

The District Commissioner saw it (the screen was made of light wooden battens with panels of thin cloth, constructed to fold in four) and remarked that he had never seen such an object at any previous Wailing Wall festival. Those very astute Muslim gentlemen instantly seized their opportunity; I am quite sure that they had paid no attention to the screen up to the moment when the District Commissioner unwittingly gave them their chance to raise a new issue.

They declared it was a barefaced Jewish attempt to seize the Mosque of El Akhsa and the Dome of the Rock; the thin end of the wedge to snatch one of the holiest places in Islam because it had once been the site of the Jewish Temple. If the District Commissioner did not at once take action, they threatened, then he alone would be responsible for a Holy War that could rouse all the Muslim races to battle for the blessed shrine from whence the Prophet made his miraculous Ascension into Paradise. If he did not at once make the Jews realize that they could not play fast-and-loose with a Muslim holy place (for the Wailing Wall is the sanctuary where the heavenly steed, El Buraq, stood before taking God's Prophet on his midnight journey), then he was a false servant to his master the King of England, and he was also betraying the mighty British Empire.

Shadows of 1900 years before, when the Jewish priests howled at poor Pontius Pilate that he was no friend of Cæsar if he let the Man of Nazareth continue to preach sedition!

The D.C. looked extremely worried at the storm he had inadvertently raised, and asked what the significance of the screen might be. The sheikhs came straight back at him, all talking at once, pointing out that, in a synagogue, the men and women worshippers are segregated from one another. Let the D.C. look at the base of the Wailing Wall. Were not the Jewish women all weeping and praying in the smaller section cut off by the screen? Were not the men in the bigger one, assembled without a woman among them? Was it not more usual for the Jews to stand anywhere they chose while praying at the Wall and not to be divided by sex?

It was true enough. The men and women *were* divided by the screen. Then was this not absolute proof, the sheikhs shrieked, that the forgotten-of-God (their contemptuous name for the Jews) had instituted a synagogue on this sacred place where they were only allowed on sufferance by the graciousness of the Muslim?

Matters had been growing tenser during the previous weeks and I

realized that this seemingly trivial incident might easily be the detonator to ignite the magazine. The District Commissioner kept calm and made a joke saying that he would, personally, see that the screen was removed without delay: in fact that he would go down himself and speak to the Beadle of the Wall, Rabbi Noah.

He did so, and when the Beadle maintained there was no significance in the screen, saying that it had been put there merely to give the women a little privacy in their lachrymose worship, the D.C. agreed that it could remain until the close of the service, but then must be taken quietly away. He explained, courteously, that the Muslim had objected to it and that he was sure the Beadle did not want to annoy them. Rabbi Noah promised to do as he was ordered, whereupon the D.C. and I walked to the great Hurvah Synagogue in the Jewish quarter, a few score yards away, to pay a courtesy visit on the Festival eve.

I became a little restive after about an hour of the ritual and whispered to the D.C. that I wanted to return to the Wailing Wall to make sure that his orders about the screen were being obeyed. He agreed, although I thought that he did not seem to attach much importance to the matter. When I reached the Wall the screen was still in position, and Rabbi Noah told me, tearfully, that as it was already the sunset of a most sacred day no Jew would touch it, for that would be servile work within the meaning of the Doxology. He promised me, however, that he would obtain the services of a couple of Christian workmen during the evening, who could take it away without committing sin.

Telling him that I must obtain a ruling from the District Commissioner, I walked back to the Hurvah Synagogue, but found that the D.C. had returned to the Residency, a Greek Patriarchate building inside the city walls on the route between the Jaffa and New Gates. He offered me a whisky-and-soda when I reported to him, but as he had several other guests he paid little attention to me beyond telling me to make sure, without offending the Jews too much, that the screen *was* removed by morning.

I had had too much experience in dealing with all sorts of religious idealists at the Holy Places to act rashly. I scribbled in my note-book an order addressed to myself, embodying the D.C.'s instructions to remove the screen by morning, and stressing that I was to regard it as a matter of urgency. A short while afterwards I got near my host again and held out my note-book and a pencil, asking him to sign it. This sort of thing was not at all unusual; he had signed plenty of orders for me before and had often given me a search-warrant under similar circumstances. He glanced

at what I had written and scrawled his name, probably amused at my insistence. I walked along to his chief clerk's office and got the old Greek Christian to press the official stamp on the order.

I visited the Wailing Wall twice during that night and on each occasion found the Beadle there. This was not in the least unusual on the Day of Atonement, and he assured me that some Christian workmen would soon be along to remove the screen. I told him I should visit him at seven in the morning and that if the screen was then still in position I should remove it without further palaver. At half-past six I was eating my breakfast when a trooper ushered in the Beadle, who bowed humbly and gave me a note from the District Commissioner saying that, owing to the Beadle's being unable to obtain non-Jewish labour, he had given him permission to keep the screen until nine o'clock. Rabbi Noah insisted on retaining the written order as his authority to show to any policeman at the Wall.

I was still unsuspecting of any intrigue, and at ten to nine I told a reliable Arab inspector to take a few men to the Wailing Wall to make sure that the screen was down. It did not seem important enough a duty to require my presence at one of the busiest hours in my day, especially as I had no doubt of the Beadle's good intentions.

A quarter of an hour later the very angry Arab officer returned, with his tunic in shreds, his face scratched, and the beginnings of a couple of black eyes! His policemen were in equally bad shape, and boiling with wrath he told me that a crowd of Jews, mainly women—and old ones at that—had attacked his party the moment he entered the Wailing Wall area, where the screen was not only still erect but had been fixed with iron strappings to the flagstones! There was worse news: a large crowd of Arabs was mustering in the bazaars, swearing vengeance on the impious Forgotten-of-God who had seized the sanctuary of El Buraq and were desecrating it by making it into one of their synagogues!

The situation was explosive and as my two seniors were out of barracks I took immediate action, knowing how quickly such a position could get beyond all control. I telephoned to Mount Scopus asking for ten British constables in battle-order, and then, grabbing my own steel helmet, walked down to the Jaffa Gate to wait for these reinforcements. Meanwhile, the reserve in barracks were paraded and issued with ball ammunition. I had already told the native orderly officer to telephone to Police Headquarters to let them know that I had gone to the scene of action and to ask them to take over control.

The British police arrived in record time, and I felt much happier when

I saw four of the old first-year ex-British gendarmes among them. They looked very cheerful as they leaped on to the pavement; I heard afterwards that they had all insisted on their right to come, saying that there would surely be some action if it was Duff who had sent for them. As we stormed down the narrow alley of David Street, and dived beneath the arches where the covered bazaars cross it near the entrance to the Jewish quarter, I saw that matters were grown extremely serious. Arabs were pouring down towards the Gate of the Chain, which is the main entrance to the Temple area, and every man of them bore a dagger in his belt or held a *nabout* club in his hand.

The whole city was buzzing like an angry beehive, and we had to cut through the throng like an armoured ship's bow; we could not afford to be gentle, for scores of human lives hung on the seconds we saved. A hundred yards short of the Gate of the Chain we turned sharply to the right, clattered downhill and winding round several corners reached the entrance to the Wailing Wall.

The narrow area beneath the great stone blocks which have stood there since King Solomon completed his father's work in building the First Temple, was packed tight with Jewish worshippers, mainly elderly women, of the older, orthodox type. A great hush fell as we appeared amid the angry roars of the great unseen mob of Muslim mustering on the farther side of the great Wall. I distinctly heard the old fighting rally of Islam shouted by a stentorian voice.

"Kill the Jewish dogs! Islam is endangered. Strike!"

The hush lasted only a few seconds before it was shattered by the shrill clamour of the raging women. I grabbed the Beadle and demanded why the screen was still in position, but poor old Rabbi Noah was beyond speech. Hating violence in all its forms, he was horrified and terror-stricken beyond his strength, and sagged supinely in my hands. Over the heads of the women I saw the screen, the symbol of the whole incident.

"Tear it down, Sergeant!" I roared, and led the way through the crowd. It was very hot and the smell of over-heated and under-washed femininity hung cloyingly sweet-sour in that narrow, sun-smitten space. Keeping closely together we forged our way forward, pushing aside the angry ladies as they hammered us with umbrellas and sticks, which clattered on our helmets; one beldame, who chose me as her particular target, belaboured my back until her parasol broke. Their fingers slashed and tore, they spat in our faces and shrieked obscenities as they strove to block our passage.

I reached the flimsy screen first, but as I did so a Jewish worthy, clad in

a long caftan and a fur-trimmed wide-eaved hat, caught hold of it and shouted in English that he meant to die where he stood and that we would have to take him along with the screen. None of our female attackers were struck by any of us and not a Jewish man was injured as we stormed our way out with the screaming rabbi clinging convulsively to the wreckage of the screen, which we carried in our midst. We reached the narrow lane leading to the Dung Gate at a point where there was a break in the houses opening on to the cactus-covered slope of the Tyropean Valley, opposite the spring of the great arch of the bridge, which once connected the Temple with the Upper City. There I halted my party, turned them about, ordered the sergeant to throw the shreds of the screen into the valley, and when the Rabbi refused to loosen his grip, he went down the twenty-foot-steep slope with it. The British police, veterans of many Jerusalem street fights, took up a strong defensive position in a deep archway, where we could be attacked only in front.

The crowd of furious women believed they were fighting sacrilegious infidels who had offered their religion a deadly insult in its most sacred shrine on the holiest day of the year, and would have torn us to pieces or trampled us to death, an unthinkable humiliating and disgraceful end for any man conscious of his masculinity, and already ashamed of the sordid part he was being forced to play in fighting females.

Fortunately for us the situation changed as soon as the shrieking women realized that we were holding an impregnable position. They screamed with hysterical fear and fright, and a wild stampede started as the whole crowd of worshippers ran shrieking uphill towards David Street. We wheeled out of our archway and mingled with them, keeping our ranks very tight as we were carried along, for I was afraid of what might happen when that crowd of insanely-shrieking Jewish women met the mob of angry Arabs thronging the main street above. At the intersection of the lane with David Street we resumed our line, facing downhill towards the Gate of the Chain, while three of the British police moved quickly up to the junction of the covered bazaars, to stop the hordes of rage-filled Arabs flooding in from the Muslim quarter, and also to block the main entrance to the Jewish quarter.

I still maintain that that day we prevented a general massacre of Jews in those cobbled, sun-drenched narrow streets. Not a single Jew was seriously injured; even the Rabbi, who had clung to the screen, sustained only a few abrasions and bruises. A few of the Arabs who tried to attack the terror-stricken torrent of Jews had their sconces cracked by our rifle-butts, but that was all.

No one who has not served in the Holy City can realize how quickly ghastly rumours can spread; within fifteen minutes the furthest alleyways of Meashorem and Mustashfa outside the walls were filled with white-faced folk watching the shopkeepers as they frenziedly clamped their shutters, while tales of a massacre in the Old City grew more horrifying with each repetition.

The first person in authority to arrive on the scene was the Inspector-General, at the head of a strong posse of armed police. He looked very angry until I gave him my report, whereupon he left at once for Headquarters so that he might have fuller control of the situation.

After him came a senior officer of the Legal department, who accused me of having used the most brutal methods against the Jewish worshippers. He would not allow me to say a word, and consequently I became extremely angry. When he asked me how many had been killed by the police I turned on him savagely and bade him to look round for any wounded or dead he could find, and when he failed to find any to come back to me and apologize. He was very angry at being addressed in such a way by so junior a person as myself, but I was past caring what might happen to my career; I have always detested the men of the long gown, especially when they presume to interfere in scenes of action.

After a couple of hours the blaze died down, and I was ordered to report to barracks, where I found my own senior officer and the Inspector-General. They asked me why I had caused such a flurry over so simple a matter as removing a screen. I explained what had happened and the significance of the screen, but they still seemed to think that I had acted rashly in forcibly removing it, and told me that I should have asked for higher authority before taking such drastic action.

I again explained the swiftly-mounting Arab fanaticism but I was told that I should not have acted on my own responsibility in so dangerous a situation. I gaped at that, and said that I had not taken any initiative but had merely obeyed the orders of the District Commissioner, and produced my note-book with my very definite orders *to remove the screen at all costs*, with the D.C.'s signature beneath it. That ended my personal responsibility, but I knew only too well how close I had become to being made the official scapegoat. As it was I made very powerful enemies, for the "Wailing Wall Incident" burgeoned into far greater importance than any of us imagined possible on the day when it occurred.

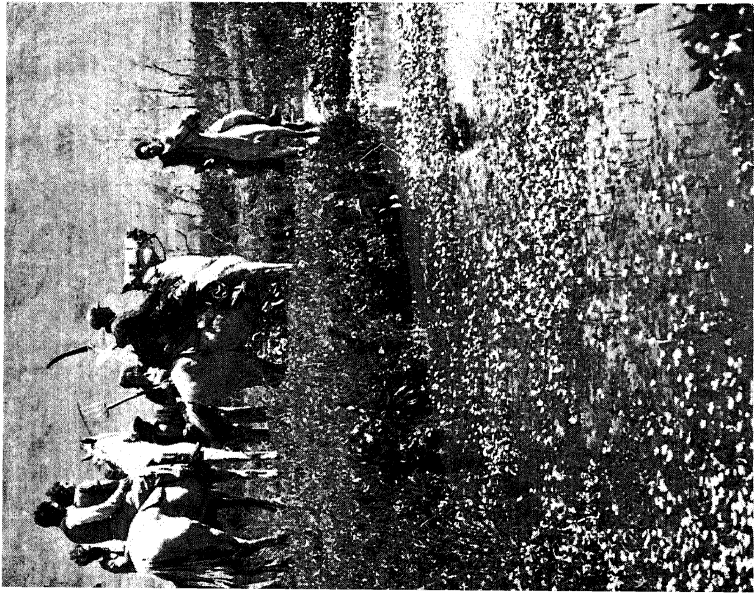
I was amused to learn how certain senior officials suggested my transfer, on promotion, of course, to another Colonial police force, but I refused "to

be kicked upstairs". I had good friends in Headquarters, Police and Prisons, in the Russian Buildings, who showed me some of the notes that passed concerning my future or let me have details of conversations. That was bad enough, but far worse was that the Arabs hailed me as a knightly saviour of the sacred shrines of Islam; I was clapped and cheered whenever I was in parts of the city where Muslim predominated. It was an embarrassing and an impossible position, but to make matters even more distasteful and difficult I was cursed and openly booed by some of the Jews whenever they were in sufficient numbers to prevent my effectually resenting it.

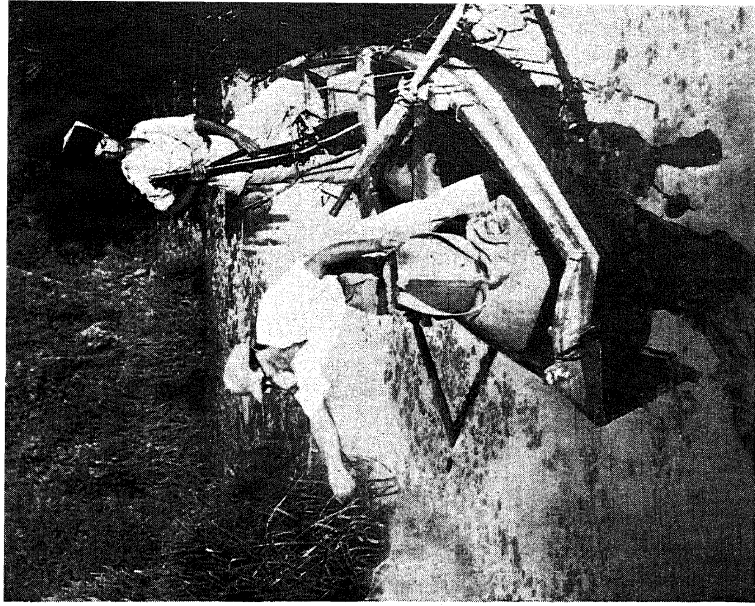
I went up to disperse a big Jewish demonstration at Mustashfa, which was then the outer suburb of Jerusalem on the Jaffa road. The rioters stopped our two motor tenders and forced my party to retreat into the police outpost to take cover. A lot of stones were thrown and there were one or two pistol shots; the crowd continued to increase until there may have been 3000 angry Jews milling on the main road, when my District Superintendent hacked his way through to the doors of the outpost with a dozen troopers at his heels. We admitted them and beat back the ravening attackers who tried to enter with the policemen. The D.S. was very angry and asked me why I had not stayed in safety in the Citadel, and so saved him this embarrassment. Outside the mob was roaring "Death to Duff" and such gentle cat-calls as "Turn Duff out and we will drink his blood." They had cut the telephone wires as well as the tyres of the police cars, while one of the tenders had been turned over on its side.

I was very, very angry and extremely humiliated. Not so much by the Superintendent's castigation as by the thought that those despicable people outside should believe that I was scared of them. *I was*, desperately, but I am a moral coward of the worst sort; one who is more afraid of being thought afraid than of anything else. I stalked over to the barred door and snarled murderously and mutinously at my senior when he ordered me to remain in the outpost and not to show myself for fear of further exasperating the yelling mob.

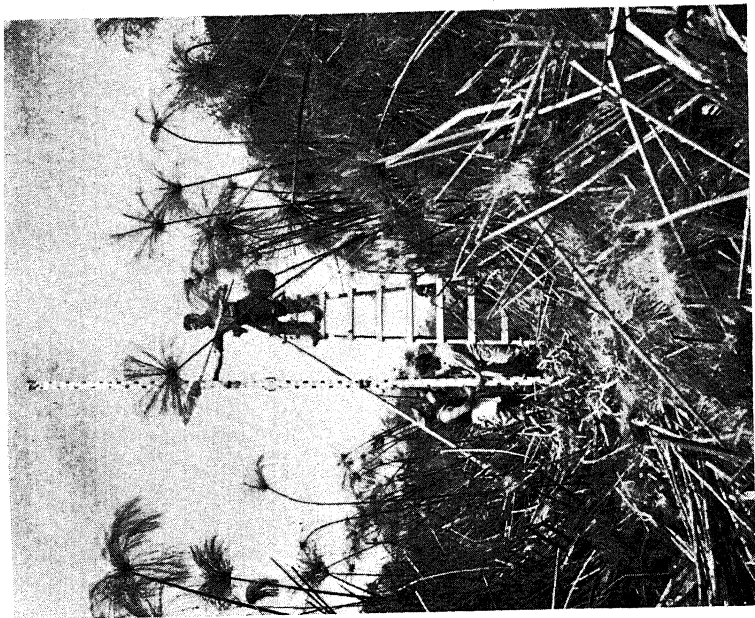
Pulling back the steel bar I stood in the doorway, and the leading rioters fell back abruptly as they saw my face. Then I roared an invitation at them to come closer and execute their threats, so maddened with rage at being harried by these "Wogs" (as we arrogantly dubbed all Palestinians, whether they were Muslim, Christians or Jews) that before five seconds had passed my sanity slipped. Once again I experienced that strange and utterly sublime ecstasy of "going berserk", as my barbarian forefathers had done. I had no consciousness of what I was doing as I sprang at that crowd with



Swamp-lands in Galilee



Clearing malarial breeding-grounds, Upper Jordan



Clearing malarial swamp-land before establishing a new colony in the Jordan Valley



The start of a Communal colony

my hide *kurbaj* whirling. If I had been shot, or stabbed, I am quite sure that I should not have felt the least pain while that glorious rosy curtain covered my eyes.

They fell back afraid. Like whipped curs they fought each other to get out of the way of my flailing lash and my kicking feet. In less than half a minute the whole crowd was fleeing in panic down the road or scattering through the alleyways. The District Superintendent backed me nobly, for he led a counter-charge as soon as I was clear of the doorway. I was back in my quarters, under open arrest for insolence and mutiny, within half an hour.

These charges were dropped after I had apologized to my commanding officer who, let me put it on record, was one of the bravest and most efficient men under whom I have ever had the honour to serve. I refused a transfer and Headquarters agreed that it might be a bad thing if I was shifted at that moment, as it might be construed into a confession that mob violence could frighten our extremely small police force.

Things did not end there, however. I had to dodge three very well-organized attempts at assassination, of which the first was the cleverest. After midnight, while inspecting my beats and patrols near the Nathan Strauss Memorial building, which was being erected in the New City and had reached its second floor, a young Jew stopped me and asked for a light for his cigarette. But when I reached into my tunic pocket for matches he suddenly leaped backwards. I still do not know why I followed his example and jumped a couple of yards to my rear, but as I did so a great stone block, weighing all of five or six hundredweight, came crashing down from the uncompleted coping above. Its fall had been beautifully timed and most efficiently executed; I should have been written off as the victim of an accident and some senior officer would have said a few nice things the following afternoon over my grave in Bishop Gobat's cemetery on Mount Zion. That graveyard is a most unsatisfactory resting-place, for archaeologists, some day, will excavate the ancient Jebusite walls which run beneath the rubble of which the slope is formed. I should hate to be dismissed as being merely "a tertiary, or even quaternary burial, probably dating from the abortive British Mandate of the first half of the twentieth century". I once saw a grave being dug there for a British gendarme which penetrated the crown of a vault below, plunging into a tunnel that I followed a long way.

I did not stop to investigate. The man who had asked for the match was gone by the time the dust cleared, but I ran as hard as I could for my car, which was waiting for me on the main road, and said nothing about the

attempt to wipe me out. I should have been dubbed an infernal nuisance, as well as a bit of a fool, by my professional brethren if I had done so, and as there was little chance of discovering my would-be slayers there seemed no sense in causing a fuss. Twenty-two years later—and in London—I met the man who dropped that stone and we spent a most convivial evening resurrecting memories.

The second attempt was not quite so cleverly planned. It took place about a week later while I was walking along the main street of Meashorem suburb, about half an hour after midnight, on one of my usual inspections of patrols. As I came opposite a small, right-angled entrance to an alley and was outlined against one of the infrequent street lamps, a hail of pistol bullets whizzed up the lane. The gunmen must have been enthusiastic amateurs for they all fired too high, as untried and nervous assassins often do. I dropped prone into the gutter, cleared away my own Colts' .450 and pitched a couple of shots down the alleyway before I made out several dim figures, whereupon I fired the remaining cartridges. There were screams and shrieks and the sound of running feet; I reloaded and put five more rounds into the darkness, keeping them fairly low. Reloading once more I moved cautiously forward to investigate the lane, encouraged by loud groans from its dark depths. I was a fool, of course, it might so easily have been a trap, but I found two young men lying dead and another one with a severe wound in the lungs.

I left instantly, and at a swift run, to fetch reinforcements from Meashorem police station; ten minutes later I was back with a patrol and the beat-men who had come running when they heard the firing, but there was nothing in the alleyway except a lot of blood on the stones; no signs of any bodies.

The third attempt to send me over Jordan was the crudest of all. I was walking along St. Paul's Road, one of my usual routes, about ten days after the shooting, when a car came straight at me. I dodged it, whereupon it swerved madly on to the sidewalk, but as I started to run, hoping to reach Government House, which was then in the same street almost facing the Italian hospital, it came at me again. I dodged behind one of the big telegraph poles as the car screeched to a halt, drew my pistol and drove two bullets through its wind-screen. Its doors, which had just opened, slammed shut and the people inside it, who had been alighting to finish me off, thought better of it for the car drove off at speed, with four more of my bullets somewhere in its coachwork.

Next day every garage and repair-shop in Palestine was searched for a car with a shattered wind-screen and holes in its body—there was not one!

Things simmered down after that. I have since heard that the hotheads among the Jews, and I fully admit their right to feel aggrieved, learned the truth of the "Wailing Wall Incident", and, as the Americans sometimes say, decided to turn the heat off me. The Hebrew and Yiddish newspapers began to attack the District Commissioner instead, for which I was profoundly grateful. The embarrassment of being hailed as a hero by the Arabs still continued, however, an infuriating business because I knew that they would alter their tune immediately some duty forced me to act against them.

Christmas at Bethlehem was interesting that year, probably all the more so because we British officers in the Palestine Police knew that the volcano on which we were sitting must erupt violently before many more months had passed. Bethlehem was not in the Jerusalem division, but I was always given charge of that little town at Christmastide. In essentials the duty was very similar to those in the Holy Sepulchre, for the same bitterly antagonistic sects and Churches were concerned.

I have always loved the great Basilica in Bethlehem, which in outline remains very much as it was when first built by Constantine the Great, a man born in York in the early fourth century. It has never been destroyed, as has the Holy Sepulchre. Though it has suffered many vicissitudes of fortune, good and evil, it is still the same church wherein Baldwin the First was crowned King of Crusading Jerusalem on Christmas Day, 1101. Its roof was given by an English king, Edward the Fourth, the Yorkist, and many of the beams still in it probably grew in the England of the Wars of the Roses.

The main door is tiny, scarcely three feet high, a mere postern in the built-up entrance of the Early Church, made like this to prevent the Muslim from stabling their horses in the nave. Attached to the Basilica on one side is the fortress-monastery of the Greek Church; on the other is a new church, erected by the French as part of the fruits of their victory in the Crimean War. To serve it there is a Franciscan friary with a most ancient cloister and the Italianate buildings of the Casa Nova, the pilgrim hospice.

We moved into Bethlehem before the dawn of Christmas Eve, the Palestinian constables marching the five miles from the Jaffa Gate. I always loved that ride at the head of armed and marching men through the cold air of the December pre-dawn, and it can be *very* chilly at that time of the year in the Judean mountains; I have twice seen deep snow in Bethlehem at Christmastide. We took up our quarters in the Serai, the offices of the District Officer and the barracks of the Palestine Police, and settled ourselves in. We had had some trouble on the previous Christmas Day, one of those

disputes which may seem so trivial and yet, in this land of burning faiths and deadly suspicions, have so often ended in bloodshed and sacrilege. I was in the Serai on that previous Christmas Eve, when a Greek monk, a great friend of mine, stamped in and demanded that I should accompany him to the Holy Stable, to see for myself the impudence of the unspeakable Latins. I lost no time and, mustering all the troopers I could find, went off with the good monk.

The Stable is a very small, irregularly-shaped cave entered by two staircases cut in the rock, leading down from the chancel of the Greeks, and also by a long, narrow passage which connects it with the warren of other caves belonging to the Latins (they are the caverns and crypts where St. Jerome translated the Scriptures and wrote the Vulgate; another is called the Chapel of the Holy Innocents). There are two altars; one is that of the Manger, the other covers a silver star set in the stone beneath, bearing the inscription in Latin, "*Here Jesus Christ was born.*" We always kept a sentry over the Star, day and night, to prevent any of the non-Latin ecclesiastics ripping it out, just as all the Latin inscriptions and epitaphs were removed from the tombs of the Crusading kings in the chapel below Calvary after the disastrous fire of 1808 in the Holy Sepulchre. The Turks, too, always maintained a sentry, for a fracas between Eastern and Western monks in this very Stable was the *casus belli* of the Crimean War, a fact which may serve to show how important were seemingly trivial acts in the Holy Places.

When I reached the Stable I found an embattled row of Greek monks glowering at a similar formation of brown-habited Franciscans, both sides eager to spring into violent action at the wink of an eye. The trouble was that the Franciscan sacristan had carried a portable electric lamp into the Stable, connected by a long length of flex-wire to the mains in the Cave of St. Jerome, which belongs to his Order, to give him a better light than the candle he normally used while he prepared the Manger for the Patriarch's Midnight Mass.

The Greek clerics, headed by the Archbishop of Bethlehem, denounced this as a contravention of the *status quo*, and demanded that I should instantly remove the electric lamp, failing which they would do so themselves. The Franciscans told me plainly that they were acting in accordance with their established rights, and would resist to the death any interference. No Hospitaller or Templar would have done battle more willingly. May the Lord God defend me from the masochism of a really fervent monk or nun!

I had a direct inspiration. I turned to the Greek archbishop and suggested that, as the electric lamp was patently portable—not affixed to the

wall or floor—and would certainly be taken away as soon as the altar had been prepared, could it not be regarded as having the same status as the candle, which was allowed for this purpose by the *status quo*?

The good man, who was only too glad to accept this loophole, said that he was quite willing to regard the lamp as being equivalent to a candle, and to my intense relief both sides withdrew. But on Twelfth Night, when the Greeks celebrate their own Christmas, it was Father Godfrey, an English Franciscan, who came storming into my room in the Serai to demand my instant presence in the Stable in order to stop the blasphemous outrage which he alleged that the Greeks were perpetrating in its hallowed depths. When I arrived the set-up was exactly the same as it had been on Christmas Eve except that, instead of a portable electric lamp, four Bethlehemite young men were carrying a rough type of quadruple yoke, from which hung the hottest, fiercest and most loudly hissing paraffin pressure-lamp that I have ever seen. It filled the little ill-ventilated cave with intense heat and an incandescent glare.

I asked the Greek abbot—for the Archbishop of Bethlehem was not present—what the meaning of this might be. Whereupon he very gently explained that, as the lamp was plainly portable—not affixed to either wall or flooring—and would be removed very shortly, that it also could be regarded as a candle. Even the Franciscans laughed as they appreciated the jest; we had no “incidents” that Christmas.

During that year the Palestine Government forbade anything but a candle being employed while the Manger altar was prepared for the Midnight Mass of Christmas. Father Godfrey and some of his brethren, however, decided that this rule was persecution, and to demonstrate their rights he announced his intention of carrying that same portable lamp, with its trail of flex, into the Stable on Christmas Eve. The Greeks, with full legal right on their side, were just as determined to resist, and thus there was a certainty of a nasty scene in which some of the clerics on both sides might be injured. The whole matter would then become a scandal which the Catholic consuls might refer to the Permanent Mandates Commission in Geneva, and so force a cancellation of the orders made by the Palestine Government.

Nothing that I could urge, or plead, influenced Father Godfrey. He was genuinely distressed at the trouble he would bring on me, but in his exalted state of mind this personal mortification was merely one more thorn in his crown of martyrdom. I tried everything, and all without success. I made appeals to his superiors, approaches to the Latin Patriarch, I even tried to

think of some way in which I might arrest him and detain him over Christmas, but I could find no answer to the problem of avoiding the publicity which the good friar was seeking.

Consequently I was a very deeply worried man when I marched into Bethlehem at the head of my policemen. I had made a report to my authorities saying that such a demonstration was likely, but they plainly hinted that if I could not handle any conceivable situation that might arise in Bethlehem I was not the man to be in charge.

In my anxiety I actually mounted the sanctuary of the Catholic church while the great ceremonies were in progress, went down on one knee to the Latin Patriarch, kissed his ring and begged him for an order commanding Father Godfrey to return forthwith to his monastery of San Salvatore in Jerusalem. Very gently the Patriarch told me that it was not in his power to order a Friar of the Custody to leave this Franciscan church without some very strong reason, one that was capable of being upheld at the subsequent inquiry, which would attend any such serious action on his part.

I again saw Father Godfrey and begged him to submit his protest through the "usual channels". He was honestly distressed, but all the sombre fire of the martyr shone in his deeply-sunken grey eyes as he insisted that it was his duty to make this physical protest because there was no other way in which it could reach the highest possible authority. Once more I had an inspiration, and by the grace of the Lord God it saved bloodshed and grave scandal.

I paraded a dozen of my largest municipal policemen that Christmas night, men who were in Bethlehem for temporary duty away from their normal work within the boundaries of the Jerusalem municipality. They were all relatives, members of a peasant family from a village near Hebron. Not one of them weighed under seventeen stone, around 238 pounds; and they had been enlisted because of their height and burliness. You may remember my description of the narrow passage connecting the Stable with the labyrinth of caverns beyond, all owned by the Franciscans; it was their layout that gave me my idea, one which I believe was an inspiration, for I could not have conceived it of myself alone.

I asked the big policemen if they would be Christians for one night only. The pious Muslim stoutly, and very vehemently, refused, but when I told them that I wanted to win a bet which I had made with my friend, Father Godfrey, to the effect that I, a tough police officer, could make more converts than any priest, they cheerfully agreed to be Christians for a few hours to allow me, their officer, to win my wager over a despised

shaveling. There is no happier or more co-operative a sportsman than the Arab of the hill villages where bets are concerned.

I posted the whole posse of oversized policemen in the narrow passage, the buttons on their tunics almost touching one wall as they put their backs against the opposite one. Father Godfrey, after encountering them at the outset of his attempt, stormed into the Serai to find me. I carefully kept him waiting for several minutes, for time was the whole essence of the business, by installing myself in the lavatory. When I emerged he sprang at me, demanding my reason for posting Muslim policemen where they were a serious obstruction to the work of the Franciscan sacristan. I promised to accompany him to the Stable and there made inquiries, but managed to waste a little more time by giving some orders about traffic arrangements. When we finally reached the Stable, after pushing through the crowds, I looked at the line of obese constables as though I had never seen them before, and when he demanded their instant removal I pretended to be deeply shocked. I asked him what his Church's authorities would say if he forced *me* to complain to the Government of Palestine that a friar had refused some poor, penitent Arab Christian constables a chance to attend Mass on the holiest night of the year? He snorted that they were not Christians but Muslim, whereupon I invited him to question each of my men in turn. Despite his thirty years in Palestine, Father Godfrey's knowledge of Arabic was rudimentary, and all he could do was to wriggle along the line, impeded by the ponderous blue-clad bulk of the men, tap each one on the chest and ask him, "*Enta Lateeni?*"—"Are you a Roman Catholic?"

With superbly wooden faces each burly peasant son-of-Islam from Hebron announced that he was a member of the friar's own Church. Father Godfrey was momentarily baffled, for he knew it would greatly damage his cause at the subsequent inquiry, if it was proved that he had tried to expel some humble members of his own Church from the Stable. He snapped that as soon as the Mass, then being celebrated at the Nativity altar, was finished I must withdraw my men, as their religious duties would be fulfilled. In the meantime he grabbed the electric lamp and the flex and made a determined attempt to wriggle his way past the policemen's protruding paunches, while I quickly lost myself in the crowd before he could appeal directly to me for help.

The constables did their duty nobly. While never giving the friar any chance to complain that they had tried to stop his passing along the passage, they made it so difficult that, in the heat and the bad air of the narrow tunnel,

he had to give it up after a few minutes. Once more he came in search of me, but I played "hard to find" until he dragged me back to the Stable, where he said that, as the men had all heard their Mass, they must leave. I put on my most shocked expression and asked him if it was not an ancient, and laudable, practice for the faithful who could do so, to hear three Masses on a Christmas Day, pointing out that this was the only time during which I could spare these pious men, and that their absence was causing extra work for their comrades.

He had to capitulate. By the time the Masses were all said my Franciscan friend was too late to make his active protest. The watchful Greek monks, highly amused, had all withdrawn with the arrival of the Latin Patriarch and his entourage in the Stable, after which there was no longer need for a candle to prepare the altar.

It was quite an expensive business for me, for I paid personally for my Hebron men's great feast of lambs, turkeys, sweetmeats and all the usual side dishes, as well as for a motor-bus to bring cousins from outlying villages on the Beersheba road into Hebron town.

There was a sequel the following Christmas, but by then I had been transferred from Jerusalem. The same problem recurred, made all the worse by the passage of another twelve months, and a fracas between Greek and Latin monks occurred in the Holy Stable. There were bloodstains on the walls and on the heavy leather curtains draping the rock sides of the cavern, all of which had to be cleaned away before they shocked foreign tourists and pilgrims.

When the Greeks were ordered to clean the Stable the Latins made ready to fight again, as the Greeks themselves did when the order was transferred to the Latins. The interesting fact then came to light that the Stable had not been washed since the Crimean War, when, as I have said, a similar squabble was the cause of the military incompetence and stupidity which sent the Light Brigade charging the Muscovite guns and left men to rot in Scutari's pest-house hospitals.

Finally a dozen native charwomen from the Government buildings at Jerusalem, complete with mops, brushes, buckets and bars of soap, were rushed out to Bethlehem in big saloon cars to keep the matter neutral, and to set no precedent that could be quoted in the *status quo*. The birthplace of the Master thus received its first scrubbing in close on seventy-five years, and once again the Palestine Government apportioned punishments to the guilty clerics. All of whom promptly appealed to Geneva and gained their case the fullest ventilation.

Book III

RETREAT FROM OUTREMER

FAREWELL TO JERUSALEM

BY the early summer of 1929 it was obvious that we should never succeed in making Palestine into an independent self-ruling State that would be friendly to Britain, for we had lost the respect and affection of all its many peoples. It is small wonder that we did not succeed, for the physical, political and economic factors were all against us, but, most of all, we failed because we did not act worthily. We did not *care* sufficiently.

The average British senior official did not trouble to learn much about the people he ruled. Instead, he insulated himself in a closed atmosphere of "Englishness" by moving almost entirely among his British *confrères*. Living in his English home in the German Colony of Jerusalem, he rose from his English bed, where he had slept beside his English wife (who knew even less about the peculiar problems of the Holy Land than he did himself, and was even less inclined to learn them). Having eaten his English breakfast, its materials purchased from the English grocers, he drove his English car to his English office, where all his conversation and correspondence was conducted in English. He probably knew no more Arabic than one or two curse-phrases and the contemptuous dismissal words, *Imshi* or *Yalla*.

His Palestinian juniors always spoke to him in his own tongue and flattered him outrageously in the hope of winning his recommendation when the promotion seasons came round. They were careful to tell him only the things he liked to hear, and he seldom had any clear notion of the incessant *Fasqad* they waged behind his back. After office hours he returned to his English dinner before going on to play English games at the English club, or to partake in the suburban English round of bridge, tea, or picnics. Very occasionally he deigned to accept the hospitality of some wealthy Palestinian, but when he did so he was not too tactful about concealing his condescension in honouring a member of a "lesser breed".

The "colonial" system of social relationships between the various ranks of his own Service were unswervingly observed. The British senior official, and more particularly his wife, toadied to their seniors, were affably guarded and greatly jealous with their own grade, and ruthlessly snubbed their juniors. The great gulf between the lowest grade of the Senior Service and the senior one of the Junior Service was impassable socially, except on the

two days marking the King's birthday and December 9th, the anniversary of Allenby's capture of Jerusalem, when there was a false *bonhomie* between all classes at the Anglican Cathedral service, a good fellowship which lasted no longer than the time needed to leave the church.

The first great handicap under which we suffered was the artificial severance of Palestine from the hinterland of which it had been an integral part for many centuries. The Palestinians could not understand that, by an act of international politics, their brothers-in-blood across the northern and eastern borders had become foreigners of a different and rival nationality. The eternal bickerings and jealousies with the French Mandatory of Syria, which persisted right from the start, further exacerbated the whole position.

Deprived of their natural, and age-old, intercourse with the Syrian and Lebanese neighbours, who had been indistinguishable from themselves before 1918, the Palestinians further found themselves subjected to the experiment of the founding of a Jewish National Home and were deprived of even the small amount of representation in their own government, which they had enjoyed after the Young Turk revolution. They were taxed without representation, while new laws, based on Western models, were imposed on them in ever-increasing volume despite promises that their own Ottoman Penal Code should not be altered.

At first so firm was the Arabs' trust in the sanctity of British promises, this was not much resented. It was not until the men, who had been mere boys when Lord Allenby walked through the Jaffa Gate, realized the true state of their affairs that in desperation they accepted the Grand Mufti's concept of their being Arabs, a title which would have been bitterly rejected by their parents a few years earlier. They watched, with helpless dismay, the never-ceasing spate of fresh decrees with the force of law which poured out with every new issue of the *Official Gazette*.

The increasing sales of land to the Jews, usually by foreclosing mortgages or absentee landlords had, by this time, begun to cause grave alarm. The Jews were every whit as much victims to this greedy minority's extortions, who asked fabulous sums for the most worthless land. Knowing that the Jews were inspired by their zeal to return to their ancient homeland, the landlords demanded outrageous prices and got them.

In that first decade a policy of wise and generous spending by the British Treasury would have paid glorious dividends, and could have secured Palestine to us as a substantial bastion in the Middle East. A hundredth part of the millions that Palestine was to cost us before we were driven out of it could have spared us blood, indignity and the insecurity

we were forced to endure. Instead of such wisdom, money was doled out in such niggardly fashion that even the essential Public Security forces were allowed to dwindle far below the safety-point. *In all the Holy Land of 1929 the Government had only about 30 British police officers and 120-odd constables in the British Section*, on whose loyalty they could rely. Some 1800 Palestinians, nearly all Muslim, formed the bulk of the Palestinian police *at a time when there was not a British Imperial soldier in garrison from Dan to Akaba, from the Jordan to the Mediterranean!* The single R.A.F. squadron had moved into Transjordan, where it was fully employed in guarding the desert borders. *Even these tiny numbers existed only on paper*, for in summer the usual leave season, not more than *ninety British police of all ranks* were actually present in Palestine. And there was always a percentage of vacancies and sick; all this while we officers never ceased to report the crumbling situation to our authorities in Jerusalem.

We few held the uneasy peace for almost a year after the Wailing Wall incident had set the danger signals so clearly, but we did it only by the personal prestige of a few police and political officers. We knew that we risked our commissions daily by having to use methods that, by the rigid new rules of the Civil Service, could have landed us in the dock to face the District Court judges if some Arab or Jewish lawyer challenged our acts. We had no illusions that the heads of departments would hesitate to make scapegoats of any of us who became an embarrassment to the security of their comfortable appointments, no matter how many reports we might have sent requesting reinforcements or stressing the true state of affairs in our divisions. To any married man, torn between his duty to the people whom he ruled and the risks he had to take to hold the precarious peace, the position was devilish. I was a bachelor, I thank God, and so did not care what happened to me so long as my own conscience was clear.

My own position was particularly difficult as I was still hailed as a hero by the Muslim and an abomination by the Jews, because of my action at the Wailing Wall. I was not sorry when the end of my command of Jerusalem Division came at the Festival of Simon the Just, a Maccabean martyr, which is celebrated annually at his cave sepulchre in the Upper Kedron Valley. A fight commenced between Muslim and Jewish children, their mothers joined in, men of both races rushed to the scene, and if I had not led in a charge of mounted police, which killed one rioter, the rebellion would have started three months before it did.

I announced my intention to resign my appointment and to quit

Palestine, feeling that the time had come for me to go on to South America. Two things deterred me: the lesser one was that some of the Jews were eager to take legal action against me for the manslaughter of the man who was killed, and I would not leave in the face of that insult, but, more important, was a talk I had with some of my brother officers, who said that for me to desert then at that moment was very like emulating a rat when a ship becomes patently unseaworthy. I remained. I was appointed to command a new penal settlement that was to build a road across the Plain of Armageddon, along the foot of the Samaritan Hills, between Harosheth-of-the-Gentiles, through Megiddo and Ta'anach, to Jenin.

I built my camp at the landward end of the seventeen-mile-long hogback of Mount Carmel, in the mouth of the Keimun Pass connecting Armageddon with the coastal Plain of Sharon. The Carmelite monastery of El Makhraka, the traditional site of the sacrifice of the priests of Baal, was 1700 feet above me. To the north flowed the narrow Kishon, winding round the knoll of Tel ul Khassis, the scene of the murder of those priests of the Phœnician deity. Westerly lay the Pass of Harosheth, leading to the Plain of Acre; east was Armageddon in all its spacious glory, with the rounded breast of Mount Tabor and the topmost houses of Nazareth in plain view, though many miles away. Beside me was Tel Keimun, the place, so it is said, where Judith beglamoured and beheaded that foolish dupe Holofernes. On the crest of this steep mound stood the tumbled ruins of a Crusading fortalice whose stones had been dragged aside to make space for the tents of Napoleon Bonaparte and his staff. Further along the foot of the hills projected the headland of Megiddo, where the Rockefeller Foundation were excavating the foundations of the city whose stables had been the main source of Solomon's wealth. Just visible beyond it was the bald top of Mount Gilboa, where Israel's first king met his death. Across the plain, among the new Jewish colonies bedabbling it, stood the grey mud-hovels of a mean Arab village marking the site of Jezreel, where Jezabel of the Dauntless Face died so gallantly. In all a most wondrous place to be. Far to the west, too, I could make out the distant, yellow cube of the Hospitaller Keep at St. John of Acre, with the dark spot on the Ladder of Tyre that marked the ruins of Montfort, Mother-house of the Teutonic Knights of ancient glory.

By dint of cajolery and the incessant bullying of contractors I won an excellent camp of wooden huts ringed by an efficient double barbed-wire fence, with twenty feet between the inner and outer barricade, each of which was fifteen feet high, and had paraffin arc-lamp standards set three on each face with elevated sentry-boxes on stilts at every corner. My

twenty-five Arab warders were housed in good quarters along a face of the wire, with the store huts and my office just below. On the slope above was the bungalow of Sub-Inspector Reuben Effendi Haszan, a tall, burly Sepharui Jew of great courage, cheerfulness and loyalty, whom I had known as a sergeant in Jerusalem. A hundred yards further away, on the crest of the ridge, stood my own four-roomed hut with a deep verandah.

I persuaded the Public Health and Public Works Departments to agree to a different site for the camp from the one they had originally chosen, so that it was more easily defensible and also up-wind from the Kishon, where anopheles mosquitoes bred by the billion. I became intensely interested in the problems of sanitation, plumbing, drainage and all the other things which allow men to live together in large numbers and primitive surroundings without being swept by disease. It was most excellent training for the life of a commander of mercenary troops which was my ambition. Sewage disposal, the covering of waste water to prevent malarial mosquitoes breeding in it, the efficient destruction of garbage and kitchen-waste to discourage the spread of flies, suppression of men urinating in the open, and the hundred-and-one-details which make all the difference between life and death, healthy, efficient men and disease-stricken hulks.

Then there was the question of defence, for in the appalling state of the country I knew that before very long there would be rebellion. As we had no forces, bar our ninety or so British policemen, there would be a lapse of at least a week before any Imperial troops could arrive, and during those seven days the people who would survive were those who had made all the preparations they could. I built a small blockhouse at the north-west and south-east angles of the wire, where each could sweep two faces with a flanking fire, for mutiny among the convicts was most probable should an attack develop.

Near my own hut I sited a larger fort, all of them with bullet-proof roofs to guard against snipers on the heights of Mount Carmel, towering above us and well within rifle range. I was very doubtful whether my warders would fight at all, but I hoped there might be some chance of their doing so if they were reasonably well protected. It was merely the ancient principle to which the mediaeval Crusaders committed themselves, that of using fortifications to compensate for the lack of man-power and striking-force.

While I was building these little forts, and pathetic enough they were, a very senior British official from Jerusalem happened to pass along the rough track that I was to convert into a road, to save many miles, the whole of the Nazareth detour, in the journey from Haifa to the Holy City. He

alighted at my camp, which was teeming with activity, came across to me as I sat watching the labourers working on the white-taped ground plan of my north-western blockhouse, and asked me what I was doing. I explained I was preparing for the day of wrath which was coming so very close, and he became first supercilious and then extremely angry. He told me that I was encouraging the Arabs to rise by showing them that I feared them. I replied that I *did* fear them and was trying to make sure that my camp, at least, should ride the storm. He began to shout at me in front of my convicts; I told him to get out of my camp, and when he haughtily refused I took him by the scruff of his jacket and carried him out, his soles scarcely touching the dusty soil.

His report against me was a masterpiece. My reply to his charges of personal assault, insubordination, insolence and causing alarm and despondency to spread among the people of my district was to say that they could have my resignation if they wished. I received no reply; experienced professional fighting men were too valuable to throw away just then.

My education in the tortuous ways of Levantine *faszad* was rounded off by my close contact with Arab convicts and warders. These latter were the dregs of the Service, for they had not only been relegated to Prisons Department because they were below the normal police standard, but two Central Jails and three penal companies had also managed to evade having them on their staffs, so that I, with the latest-formed organization, had all the useless ullages shunned by every other officer. In the long run it did not matter, for I had several weeks to work upon them before the rebellion struck, and in that time I can make a fair imitation of a man out of a sheet of cardboard, if I do not blast him in the process.

There was a great proportion of Bedouin among the prisoners, and I learned from Steele, the Superintendent of the Central Jail at Acre, that these desert men fared very badly when confined inside stone walls. They quickly sicken with tuberculosis and other diseases of narrow spaces, so that he sent as many of them as he could to the camps where they might have some chance of survival. I wish to make one point quite clear: the atmosphere of a British prison and one in Palestine was very different, for there there was not that air of disgrace, guilt and shame that one feels in jails at home. The Arab convict did not hold himself abased; he was unconscious of having done anything shameful in breaking the laws of an infidel and Outlander government; on the contrary, he considered himself a hero for not dumbly acquiescing in them. There is an Arab proverb which states that only he-men ever go to prison; weaklings have not the courage to

commit the acts which earn prison sentences. Consequently there is not the spiritual dejection and despair one meets at home. I will not enter into the sexual aberrations which occur when men with the hot passions of the Arab are confined in cells holding as many as sixty men. There was, of course, a constant desire to escape—each man of the prison population was for ever plotting mutiny or some other way of regaining his liberty—but that was the normal state of affairs and one accepted it.

My main danger, of course, was that which faced the Governors of Dachau and Belsen: of becoming a sadistic tyrant. With hundreds of prisoners completely subservient to my vagaries, with the power to make them completely miserable, even to cause their deaths by overwork or by giving them risky jobs, or of making their days easy and comfortable, there was the temptation to arrogate god-like attributes to oneself. The archæologists of the Rockefeller Institute at Megiddo were my saviours, for their kindness to me and their careful, detailed explanations of what they were discovering, also the history they were unveiling, gave me the interests I needed to enable me to relax from my unpleasant public duties. I sat down in the evenings after lock-up, when there was nothing to do and laboriously regained my lost Latin—so that I could enjoy an edition of William of Tyre and a "*Gesta Francorum*" which I found in a small shop in Antioch.

June, July and August passed quietly while we worked on the road. There were gangs in the quarries, others making cuttings, or embankments where the ground was low, parties cutting brushwood on the slopes of Carmel to make fascines to throw into the frequent marshy places where ancient drainage-works had disappeared under the palsied hand of the Ottoman. Life was savage and severe; two or three convicts were shot while trying to make a break for liberty, others died from malaria or other diseases; one or two were destroyed in blasting accidents, some were lost in the bogs or under collapsing earth-banks. A hundred men were needed to pull the road-roller, fifty in front, fifty behind, for we worked with the primitiveness of Cheops' own workmen.

I made things a trifle easier by dividing the convicts into a port and a starboard watch, and then sub-dividing each watch into divisions, which were themselves split into messes, until my basic unit was ten convicts and a leading prisoner responsible to a prisoner petty-officer in charge of the "top", who, in his turn, was answerable to the convict boatswain in command of the watch. He made his reports to a highway robber serving a life sentence named Husni Kuszar, whom I rated Commissioned Boatswain and to whom I passed all orders for the working of the camp. Thus Number 4

Mess of Starboard Forecastle Division might be working on camp duties for the week, while Number 2 Mess of Port Mizzen-top was in the quarries.

By taking a great deal of trouble to prevent bribery, and by setting a task which, once completed, allowed the individual gang to finish work for the day, we achieved great results. A careful tally was kept of the record of each gang, and on Friday, the Muslim sabbath, and the weekly day of rest, the names of those who had done best during the preceding six days were published and they worked the following week on light camp duties. The best gang of all was allowed the forfeited cigarettes and prison contraband detected during the week, for there was continual smuggling and trafficking; I did my best to stop it but the warders were often too astute for me, even though I made one or two severe examples.

The badges for the different ranks in my prison hierarchy were given to me by the Paymaster-Commander of a British battleship which visited Haifa about this time. He was intrigued by my idea of a "stone frigate" manned by convicts and helped me all he could. Another change that was much appreciated was that instead of black-and-white "Sing Sing" uniforms then worn by all prisoners in Palestine, white clothing was issued to every one of the rank of leading prisoner and above. It sounds fantastic, I know, but have not men all over the world vied with each other to wear some distinctive clothing, a shred of ribbon, or some stamped piece of metal on their breasts? When the more substantial fruits of authority, a little responsibility, better rations and an easier job were added it was not difficult to get men who were willing to rule their fellows-in-misfortune and so keep order and maintain a high output of labour. But I was also aware of the dangers of allowing misery to rule misery.

Then, one afternoon in early September, some Jewish children kicked a football over a wall into a field on the western outskirts of Jerusalem. On the farther side of that wall sat a young Arab girl from nearby Lifta village, keeping watch over her father's ripening tomato crop. The Jewish boys saw the Muslim maid hide their ball beneath her flowing skirts and, running over to her, asked for its return. She refused, whereupon they tried to snatch it from her. She screamed that the brats of the Forgotten of God were trying to rape a daughter of the Faith, and some Arabs from her own village, who were walking along the road on their way home from the market at the Damascus Gate, jumped the low wall and rushed to her rescue. Neighbouring Jewish households added to the uproar and Jewish men ran to the rescue of their children, whom they saw being belaboured by the Lifta Arabs. Iron-shod clubs in the Muslim hands and the shepherds' skinning-knives in

their belts came into action against the ever-increasing horde of Jews, with the result that one of the latter was killed, his skull crushed by a club blow. Within half an hour pistol-firing and grenade-throwing was general all over New Jerusalem, and the wildest turmoil prevailed as the Muslim rushed to the mosques in the Temple Area, while the Jews took frantic steps to protect their families and their property.

Next morning some of the more militant of the younger Jews declared that they would carry the corpse of their slaughtered comrade through the Jaffa Gate and thence across the Old City to the Gate of St. Stephen in the eastern wall, on its funeral journey to the cemetery in the Valley of Jehoshaphat below Gethsemane. The Muslim streamed up from the depths of the Old City and gathered in a sullen mob at the Jaffa Gate, determined to resist this insulting innovation, for Jewish funerals normally proceeded to the graveyard in the arid valley, outside the walls, by way of the Jericho road.

The Muslim and Jewish crowds faced each other at the Jaffa Gate, the Arabs inside the walls lowering at the Jews, who were trying to enter with their sheeted corpse on its shoulder-borne steel-slotted stretcher. Between the two glowering mobs were some half a dozen British constables and about twenty-odd Arabs. If the order to fire even one round at the legs of the rioters had been given, when the Arabs surged forward, yelling their age-old battle shout, this might have quelled it. Instead the contestants were sprayed with water from the municipal water-wagon, which also did duty as a fire-engine when required.

The Arab leaders roared jubilantly that this was clear proof that the British hated the Jews as much as did all good Muslim and would not stir a finger to save the Forgotten of God from their deserts. With a scream of triumph the Arabs charged home into the Jewish funeral crowd and men died very horribly under the paunch-ripping strokes of backhand daggers, or had their brains beaten out by clubs. The little knot of bewildered policemen, having no orders to open fire, were overrun and swept aside. Within the hour rebellion was general, and mobs of yelling, maddened, looting Arab fanatics were shooting, burning, raping and killing throughout Jerusalem and all Southern Palestine.

REVOLT ON ARMAGEDDON

THOUGH we had expected it for so long, the actual out-flaring of the 1929 Rebellion caught most of us temporarily off our balance. My requests for a Lewis gun having been refused, I made what preparations I could, for I knew that if an attack developed I would need some weapons more powerful than Service rifles. I considered installing one of the muzzle-loading cannon, of which there were still a few standing on the remoter parts of the ramparts of Acre. But I finally decided that such a move would merely accentuate my weakness, for I would not be able to disguise the nature of my obsolete ordnance, as I had done while I was in the Coastguard.

I built, instead, a far less efficient weapon, but one that, by its strangeness, would not earn the contempt of my Arab neighbours, and even might make them misdoubt the wisdom of attacking my camp to free their compatriots. During the erection of the camp, large stone balls, perfectly rounded and of a roughly uniform size of about eighteen inches diameter and 100 pounds weight, were continually being discovered just beneath the surface. They were missiles cast by the engines of the Templar Castle which had once stood on Tel Keimun, and I was astonished to find several of them lying close on 500 yards from the steep-sided knoll. They gave me an idea, and with the aid of my small library of Crusading and mediaeval chronicles I designed a large stone-caster on the lines of those employed by Robert Shortbreeches, Godfrey and St. Gilles in their 1099 siege of Jerusalem.

I had plenty of carpenters, masons and blacksmiths among my convicts who could work on the long steel girders meant for the construction of road bridges over the watercourses on our route. By a process of trial and error I discovered the best length of the beam I needed to throw a forty-pound missile about 400 yards. I also found its point of balance, as well as the counter-weight required to depress the shorter end with maximum speed and power to throw the projectile from the "spoon" on the longer end with the highest velocity. A deep pit was dug at the foot of the two uprights, through which a stout bolt was thrust, upon which the beam rotated. Into this pit the heavily-weighted shorter end (kept high in the air until the moment of release by an easily removable bolt holding down the opposite longer end) plunged abruptly, thereby throwing the missile forward. By the same process

I learned where to place stop-chocks on the uprights to check the swing of the beam at the point where it achieved maximum casting power.

A block and tackle, secured to a ringbolt in the ground-mat of concrete, and thence to a shackle at the long end of the beam, permitted a crew to reload by pulling it down, thereby raising the weight on the short end. The beam's tip was then secured by a stout trigger, working on one side in a steel slot, also sunk into concrete, but bolted on its other extremity to a ring fixed in the concrete ground-mat, which could be released by the blow of a sledge-hammer. In a wide "spoon" lay my special "shell", a four-gallon petrol tin filled with washed gravel from the Kishon, each stone of uniform size and about the volume of a musket-ball. Interstices were left in the gravel into which I placed six sticks of dynamite from my quarrying stores, which had their fuses led to one master length projecting from the centre of the resoldered lid.

We had many misfires, but slowly and steadily we mastered the weapon, until one day I threw a live bomb close on 300 yards. It burst with a satisfying roar a second or so after landing, scattering gravel in a whizzing shower for a radius of fifty yards. Later I was able to burst the missiles in the air and obtained a lot of amusement and experience in perfecting the weapon. Once that was done I had two more engines erected, for the greatest defect of my mangonels was that they could not be traversed.

All this experimenting was duly noted by the Arabs living on the plain and in the hills behind me, and I was quite sure that they were both impressed and puzzled by the strange artillery they saw rising among the fortifications near my bungalow. My other precautions were to conceal a complete set of clothing and footwear, along with an Arab mantle and headdress, in a recess on the lower slopes of Carmel. I put a rifle with 100 rounds, a water-bottle and a haversack filled with food in the same place, along with a pair of binoculars and a compass, so that if I was surprised during the night I need not waste any time in dressing, or finding the gear I should require before starting for the Syrian border.

I stored all my spare ammunition and the rifles not required by the warders on duty in the dining-room of my hut. Without the knowledge of the men I placed a large quantity of dynamite beneath the floor and connected it to two lengths of fuse, one of which was placed near my bed-head when I retired for the night; the other I led to a reel of instantaneous fuse (it burns at the rate of ninety feet a second) which I hid in my lavatory. If I was taken completely by surprise during the night and death was certain, I could send all my attackers, as well as the arms and ammunition,

soaring aloft with myself, in one general holocaust. If I had sufficient warning I hoped to get far enough with my reel of fuse unwinding to reach a safe distance before blowing up my hut, and so cause sufficient diversion to clothe myself at my little cache and get clear away.

When the rebellion commenced my subordinate, Reuben Effendi Haszan, was in Jerusalem, hoping to escort Madame Haszan and his family to his neat little bungalow. He was immediately pressed into service in the Holy City, and I was left alone. Every loyal man was of the utmost value in Jerusalem; Headquarters recruited every one they could find, including casual visitors, among whom a group of Oxford divinity students greatly distinguished themselves by their courage and devotion to duty under fire.

I had supped at the Rockefeller Institute at Megiddo on that first evening of the rebellion, and I was driving back to camp, quite unaware of the day's events, when I was stopped by a large mob of several hundred armed Arabs as I neared the village of Abu Shushe. For a few seconds things looked very dangerous, as they were howling for the blood of the Jew they hoped they had found. Fortunately some of them recognized me and yelled that not only was I a British officer, but that I was Duff Effendi, the "Hero of the Wailing Wall". For a few seconds I was in almost as great peril from their effusive friendliness as I had been from their enmity while they believed I was a Jew.

They told me marvellous tales of Arab victory in Jerusalem and gleefully related that the British officials were all as glad to see the end of the Forgotten of God as were the Muslim. One man produced a postcard-sized photograph showing the blue-and-white bars of the Zionist ensign flaunting in the wind above the Dome of the Rock, the Most Noble Sanctuary, as proof of the impiety of the Jews before all Islam rose against them. I did my best to explain that the picture was a fake, but the Arabs were so sure that the camera could not lie that they laughed at my words.

I was sent on my way with shouts of laughter and cheerful assurances that the Jews would trouble us no more and the mob streamed away towards Nahalal, a big colony five miles distant across level Armageddon. I was only too anxious to return to my camp before the news of revolt reached the convicts, and as the horde of attackers would be in full view of Nahalal long before they could reach it, there was nothing I could do. With no telephone in my camp, and no means of visual signalling, I was quite unable to warn the threatened colony.

I found that the inmates of the camp were already fully aware of what had happened, so after sending one warder on his bicycle the twenty-five

miles to Haifa Headquarters, I put my plans into operation. I had no reason to hope that my warders would remain loyal, but I allowed them to believe that I had not the least doubts of their faithfulness, while I made ready to take the most drastic means to quell any incipient mutiny. There is no need to stress the precariousness of my position, nor my responsibility to ensure that several hundred convicts did not win clear to join the rebels, or that the rifles, explosives and ammunition in my charge did not fall into treasonable hands. The most trying thing was that I had no way of communicating with the outside world should matters reach a climax.

My time of testing came three nights later, when a lorry from Mishmar Ha'Emek, a little communal colony half-way to Megiddo, bumped into my camp just before midnight. Its driver was a young and wounded Jew who begged for instant help against hundreds of Arabs who were attacking his people. My natural reaction was to shelter beneath my official instructions, which laid down very strictly that my only responsibility was to safeguard the prison under my charge, and also stressed the fact that nothing that might happen in the surrounding area was my concern. I was a prison officer, not a policeman, and I was expressly forbidden to interfere in anything outside the perimeter of my camp. In addition I had suffered a deal of undeserved persecution and contempt, openly expressed in booing and hissing, from the Jews, who were still threatening me with legal proceedings over that man killed at the Feast of Simon the Just. They had done all they could to secure my dismissal; there was not the least reason why I should risk a prison sentence, and disgrace for dereliction of my duty, by going to their help.

That was probably the main reason why I did go. That and the revulsion I felt to the idea of white women suffering rape and murder from the marauders in the Samaritan Hills. Of course, I may have been too great a moral coward, too afraid of being dubbed a coward, to refuse my help. I was not in the least sure of the faithfulness of my Arab warders and this seemed to be a good time to test it and end my uncertainties.

Corporal Abdul Muhtadi,¹ the greatest scallywag I had, a venal, tyrannical, animally-ignorant brute, volunteered at once to accompany me, and I was able to select four constables because my whole force stepped forward when I called. We left camp in the lorry, driven by the Jew, who bravely disregarded his wounds. We saved Mishmar Ha'Emek, after some severe fighting, by rolling up the Arab flank along the horseshoe-ridge of low hills above the colony, after dynamiting a small mill which they were using

¹ Name, alone, is fictitious.

as a key-point. Because they never suspected our real weakness, we six men drove off close on 300 rebels, all of them armed with rifles. We entered the farmyard, helped the colonists to build a strong-point from their grain, which was bagged and ready for transportation to the mills, and then beat off the dawn attack, when the Arabs came charging in to snatch their loot. I had pointed out to the young Jews that we must avoid killing any of the Arabs if we could, so as to obviate the starting of a blood feud which might last for generations. They co-operated so magnificently that we routed the rebels without sending a single one of them to enjoy the favours of the Eternal Maidens of Paradise.

A great compliment was paid me in this little colony, for they trusted me to be a man and not a police official, by their gravely producing, while I was mustering all their available weapons to withstand that dawn attack, half a dozen pistols whose possession would have meant prison sentences for them if they had misjudged their policeman.

After the Arab onslaught was broken and the scores of their women, who slunk along in the rear, carrying sacks to bear away the loot, had fled into the hills, I advised the colonists to evacuate themselves to Afuleh, the central settlement in the middle of Armageddon, and then returned to my camp as quickly as I could. I was very anxious to get back, as the noise of battle must have kept the convicts wondering whether their chance of liberty might have come. I was whisked back in the truck, and found to my joy that the prisoners did not even know that I had been away.

During that day matters became very strained. In the middle of the morning I engaged, at an extreme range of 1800 yards, a party of several hundred mounted Arabs, who streamed past my barbed wire on their way to ravage some of the colonies in the plain beyond. The rapid and sustained fire of my twenty-five rifles did them little harm, but it was sufficient to cause them to disperse and break into small village contingents, only too anxious to get home once they knew that they would not have a risk-free walk-over. At midday mutiny flared up, but I stopped it with a burst of rapid-fire very low over the prisoners' heads. They were confined in their huts after that, and fair warning was given that any man seen outside them would be shot at sight. Only one man tested my resolution and I put four bullets so close to his feet that he broke all sprinting records on his way back to the shelter of his hut.

That evening an attack on the camp developed, and I sent all hands to action-stations, warning the convicts that it meant instant death if they tried to help the attackers in any way. I advised them to lie down on the

floors of their huts for fear of bullets from outside. The time had come to try my mediaeval artillery! The engines behaved perfectly and cast their smoking missiles almost exactly where I wished to place them. The roar of the bursting dynamite and the showers of whizzing gravel shrapnel proved to be more than the 1000 or so attackers could stand. Once they began to run, my warders plucked up heart-of-grace and continued to fire at them up to the limits of range, though surprisingly there were no fatalities.

I felt better that night than I had done for some time. Nothing succeeds like success; I had won the confidence of my Arab warders as well as the knowledge that my convicts were in a proper state of meekness and unlikely to make trouble unless they were first certain of powerful support from outside. My anxieties, however, grew with the hours as rumour after rumour reached us about what was happening in the rest of Palestine. The only facts I had were that, *in all Galilee and Samaria, there were only seven British officers and four British other-ranks of the Palestine Police*, the remainder having been summoned to Jerusalem to deal with the situation there.

Heavy fighting was reported in Haifa and Jaffa, in Safed and Hebron—the whole Holy Land was ablaze. The strange thing, however, was that there was little hostility shown against individual Britons; the Arab hatred was entirely concerned with the Jews. In fact the Arabs seemed to look on us as their friends and well-wishers in the task of extirpating the Forgotten of God, but imagined that we could not openly assist them, much as we might enjoy the spectacle of what they were doing.

There were many instances of this Arab desire not to injure Britons. One of the best known concerned an official of the Public Health Department, who was caught by a band of rebels while he was driving his car from Haifa to Jerusalem by way of Nablus. They dragged him from his driving-seat and told him that they meant to cut his throat, as he was an accursed Jew. He knew no more Arabic than the ruck of his equals-in-rank, but he managed to make them understand that he claimed to be a British Government official stationed in Haifa. They scoffed and said that he was most certainly a Jew, but to test his claim to be serving in Haifa, asked him the name of the Mufti of that town. He did not know. His captors became quite certain that he really was an impious Jew lying to escape the fate which a just and merciful Allah had decreed for him. They recommenced hustling him to the ditch, where they meant to cut his throat with both neatness and dispatch.

At the very last moment the man had an inspiration. Shaking off their hands, he ripped open the front of his trousers and proved to them that he

did not carry in his flesh the mark of Abraham's children. That convinced them, as nothing else could have done, and they sent him on his way. The story goes that he was stopped several times before he reached the comparative safety of Nablus Barracks, and was forced to display his passport on each occasion!

Still the authorities in Jerusalem delayed to ask for Imperial troops; probably they hoped to deal with the rebellion without causing extra expense by bringing in soldiery from Malta and Egypt. But they had already made that impossible by their niggardly treatment of the Palestine Police and their disbandment of the Gendarmerie. If that Force had been in existence with the men it had owned in 1922, the situation would never have got out of hand.

In Hebron scores of harmless Orthodox Jews died horribly under the knives of their Arab fellow-townsmen because the British officer-in-charge was not sent the five British policemen for whom he prayed, after his own native force had disintegrated. He fought the raging mob single-handed for hours, but he was wounded at last, and so could not stop them when they broke in and slew every Jew they could find. In Safed it was the same story: many Jews died in that Galilean hill-top town for the lack of a couple of British police constables. My own request for only a single man to relieve my intolerable strain was not only refused, but I was told that no Imperial soldiers could be expected for at least another forty-eight hours.

That night I saw many fires all over Armageddon, as the stackyards of Jewish colonies and lonely farmsteads went up in flame and smoke, and I was selfishly glad that all of them were too distant for me to send help. Just before midnight, however, the sky over Mishmar Ha'Emek reddened with the flaring of the stackyard, and I heard intense firing from its direction. With the same corporal and four men I started off on foot to give what help I could, and I carried with me the beautiful battle-axe which I retrieved from that Wahabite battlefield in Transjordan. I had always entertained a private ambition to use it in war, and as it was impossible to carry it in street-fighting in Jerusalem, this seemed to be my long-awaited opportunity to implement my dream.

We evaded an ambush in a Muslim cemetery which lay athwart the track, half-way to the colony, by great good luck, for the Arabs had provided against my reappearance at Mishmar Ha'Emek by posting a party in the burial-ground. But, as they had expected us to travel by lorry or car, they had kept no lookout for men marching swiftly and silently along the grass, which grows in the damp soil beside the cemetery. We had several

hectic moments of using bayonets and my battle-axe before we dislodged the Arabs and pressed on again. Making a detour round the mill, which I had dynamited during the earlier rescue, we got astride the horseshoe of low hills above the blazing colony without meeting any opposition.

In the light of the burning stacks I saw a few white-clad figures flitting about and occasionally firing their rifles, but I took very little notice of them. My attention was focused on the hill crest from which scores of rifles were shooting into the buildings beneath. We advanced by short rushes along the almost level crest, firing five rounds rapid as we dropped prone, reloading, rising and then repeating the tactics until the rebels began to withdraw under the impression that we were some strong force of police or newly-landed soldiers, who had come to the rescue.

It was only then that I saw that some of the white-clad figures had formed a rough line and were advancing towards the foot of my hill. It was an odd thing for Arabs to do, but again I paid little attention, for there had been much illegal drilling going on, and I imagined that this must be some youngster demonstrating his prowess as a tactician. It gave me a chance to end matters by striking hard at the only solid enemy in sight.

So, when they were scarcely more than 100 yards away and about seventy feet below us, I whispered orders for my party to load with ten rounds. When I blew my whistle the Arab warders were to fire "five rounds rapid" into the crowd beneath us and then charge home with the bayonet, reserving the remainder of the cartridges in their magazines to turn the defeat of the white-clad people into a rout. I was actually raising my whistle to my lips to give the signal when, to my most utter astonishment, an inimitable Cockney voice suddenly shouted below me, not forty feet away:

"Right, me lucky lads—soon as the bastards get up, let 'em . . . well 'ave it, right in the guts! Steady now. Wait for the word!"

Scarcely trusting my ears, I challenged and got an instant reply:

"Royal Nivy 'ere! 'Oo the bloody 'ell're you?"

When I had told them I was bidden to stand up, to come forward with my hands held out in front of me, and that, if I tried any funny business, I'd be turned into a so-and-so colander. I did as I was bid and strode downhill, the broad head of the battle-axe swinging from the lanyard around my wrist, glittering in the flame light from the stackyard.

"Blimey, boys," the voice exploded, "look 'oo's 'ere. Richard the . . . Lion-'eart with 'is . . . great chopper."

There were many such tragi-comedies while the British Imperial troops

came back into Palestine and restored order, but life in my penal settlement soon returned to its old round until, weakened by malaria and rotted by sheer monotony, I fell sick and, for my great and ultimate good, was taken to the Edinburgh Medical Mission Hospital in Nazareth, where I met Janet and my whole, long-determined plan of life underwent a final and beneficial change.

FAREWELL TO OUTREMER

I REMAINED in the service of the Palestine Government for just over two years after the quelling of the rebellion, but all the joy of filling a Templar's saddle was gone. We all knew that our chance of making a success in the Holy Land was passed for ever and that there was nothing constructive in the future, no chance of our ever winning the loyalty, or even the honest co-operation, of its peoples. They no longer believed that we meant to lead them to self-government, while the rift between Arab and Jew became wider and more unbridgeable with every day that passed. This entailed the progressive increase of the police and the continual strengthening of the Imperial garrison, for, as the Palestinians' trust in us faded, we were forced to increase the repressions inherent in Crown Colony government and, to do so, we needed more men and weapons, new laws and increased penalties. Cultured races like the Jews and Arabs cannot be governed like aboriginal primitives, yet we offered them no better form of rule and consequently their just resentments became ever more exacerbated and apparent.

Even more crippling was the lack of any fixed policy and the daily shifts in the nebulous methods employed. The Government of Palestine became one of weak and Micawberish expediency, always waiting for something to turn up that never did. Truckling appeasements, succeeding cases of harsh and unreasonable repression, were followed by weak appeals and fulsome flattery of local leaders. Intrigue and opportunism replaced dignity and coherence, until the officers charged with maintaining order and peace in the remote country areas became so confused with the never-ending shifts in Jerusalem Headquarters that they were afraid to take any definite action. Fear of becoming scapegoats if complaints were made to Geneva, or to Whitehall by native or Jewish leaders with grievances, chilled all enthusiasm.

The case of the "Three Executed Rebels" may serve to demonstrate the lack of any settled policy and exemplify the pitiful subterfuges to which we were so often reduced. Twenty-seven Arabs and one Jew were sentenced to death, and had their appeals dismissed, for their part in the 1929 rising, and the Government appeared adamant in decreeing the executions of all of them. It asserted this determination several times and was never firmer than it was a few hours before it reprieved all but three of the Arabs—at which

the rest of the Muslim raised a cry that the British dared not hang a Jew and so had offered twenty-four Arab lives as a makeweight. They insisted that it must be all or none—that there was no justification for selecting three men to die on the scaffold from all those who were sentenced.

Nevertheless, Government proceeded with the hangings, arousing further recriminations and accusation that they did so only because of Zionist insistence upon it, a contention that was entirely false but, nevertheless, was widely believed by the Muslim. The executions were, in fact, quite justified. One of the condemned was Fuad el Hedjazi, a young Muslim from Safed who, when he was a baby, had been found dying in the gutter by an aged Jewish chemist. Fuad was reared as the chemist's own child, his Muslim faith was carefully protected; he was trained as a dispenser and, when he was old enough, found a good position in the Public Health service. Yet, when the rebellion broke out, Fuad murdered his benefactor and his foster-mother in a most barbarous fashion, and wreaked his lust on the body of their daughter under threats of death. If any felon has ever deserved the rope, Fuad was that man.

Where Government went so sadly astray was in ordering that the bodies of the three executed men should be buried in a secret grave, so that there might be no chance of their bones being enshrined in a "Martyrs' Memorial". It was the custom in Palestine, and had been for centuries, that the bodies of the executed should be surrendered to their relatives, or if no relations or friends were willing to receive them, laid to rest in the ordinary cemetery. The British custom of burial within the prison precincts was unknown. Elaborate precautions were taken to ensure the secrecy of their tomb, which was dug by four time-expired British constables due to leave Palestine the following day, in the far depths of the dungeons beneath the Hospitaller Castle in Acre, where probably no human foot had trodden since the Crusades. The grave was charged with quicklime, and dug at midnight, when no one was likely to see the flickering stable lanterns as the amateur sextons crossed the arsenal garden to the newly-discovered entrance beneath the keep.

A vast and furious crowd milled round the walls of the old castle the next morning, protesting at the executions and demanding that the corpses be handed to them in accordance with custom. Instead, the three dead men were rushed to the secret grave, and all traces of recent sepulture were removed. Government repeated its orders to us that the corpses must not be surrendered, as a Martyrs' Memorial was actually being built outside the Landward Gate. The situation grew swiftly worse as the Arabs, whipped to

the last pitch of frenzy, were seeking scaling-ladders, pickaxes, explosives, anything with which to breach the walls of the ancient fortress—and still the officer in charge had to warn them that the bodies could not be surrendered.

Then came word from a frightened Administration, ordering him to hand the bodies over at once and to allow no sign to show that they had been previously buried. He tried to point out the effects of quicklime, but without avail. The same four men hurried to the dungeons, pulled the bodies to the surface, rushed them to the British police mess-room inside the Castle, laid them on the dining-tables, washed them with vinegar to counteract the lime, brushed their clothes, polished their shoes, parted their hair, gave them a manicure and handed them over to the sobbing relatives. For the rest of the day Acre rang with shouts of triumph, with elaborate Oriental mourning cries and the dirges of thousands of women as the three "martyrs" were laid to rest in the shrine that was completed by sunset.

I quote this as only one of many incidents in order to demonstrate the weak pliability and uncertainty of the Palestine Government which persisted right to the end of the Thirty Years' Crusade. Never has there been a more hectic season of "yardarm-clearing" than that which preceded the arrival of the Commission of Inquiry into the causes and handling of the 1929 rising. The senior officials in Jerusalem did not seem able to grasp the difficulties and trials of the man on the spot, of the police or Political Officer in the outlying areas. I cannot put this attitude better than it was by the Royal Commission on Palestine, sitting in 1937 at the end of the second decade, when the full results of lack of imagination and of ineptitude became even more apparent. In Chapter VI, paragraph 37, of its Report, the Royal Commission states:

"It is clearly desirable that all Assistant Secretaries should have had District experience. Without such experience a Secretariat tends to become a caste out of touch with the realities of the Administration and out of sympathy with the officers in the districts whose difficulties it is unable to appreciate."

Further on it states:

"A small incident, even the enforcement of laws against a trespasser might provoke a riot. Hence there is a natural desire at Headquarters that they should be consulted before action is taken."

By then it would have been too late to take action and the district or police officer would have earned dismissal.

I will round off with part of paragraph 35 of the same chapter of the Royal Commission's Report:

"It is important to remember how this Administration grew up in Palestine. It was started by complete amateurs led by amateurs . . . it was the blind leading the blind."

I have no wish to describe the two further years I spent in Palestine. I had many experiences just as exciting and as strange as those I have already described. An ex-convict tried one night to blow up my dwelling in the belief that my predecessor, whom I had relieved two days earlier, was still living there. I had my native officer murdered in my garden in Tulkarm because, his height and build being similar to my own, the assassins thought it was I who was walking down the path in the dusk. Out of eighteen murder cases in Tulkarm I caught, or killed, sixteen of the criminals. I would like to describe the Paschal Sacrifice of the Samaritans on Mount Gerizim, where the last Sacrifice of the Old Law was offered every year until 1949, but has now ceased for ever. There are a hundred things, a score of queer situations, dozens of personal experiences, every whit as out-of-the-ordinary as those of which I have written, but they do not matter, for all joy was gone from us, and no longer was there any true pride of service.

Then, too, I had met Janet and, after a long year, I plucked up my courage to propose to her. Let me tell one tale about her which may serve to show the Palestine of her time and also what manner of woman she is. Soon after she began her duties in the Scots hospital at Nazareth, when she was scarcely twenty-three, an Arab peasant was brought in, sorely wounded, from the nearby village of Seffuriyeh, which once was Sepphoris and Herod's capital of Galilee, the natal town of Our Lady. The patient was so badly stabbed in a normal clan fight that he was expected to die but, owing to a combination of his own native toughness and the excellent nursing he received, turned the corner.

The news of his recovery so infuriated the enemy clansmen in his village that they marched over the hills to the hospital in force to complete their murderous work. Fortunately, Janet saw the men mustering on the hill terrace in front of the hospital, whose wards, because of the steep slope, were all on the next floor above ground level, and with her nurses, Christian Arabs and Armenian girls, she slammed the door and got all the tall casement windows closed except one which jammed. The Seffuriyeh men, daggers in teeth, clambered up a rowan-pipe to that window, where stood this

small, indomitable Scotswoman, armed with a broom, which she brought down on each skull as it reached the window-still. By her gallant and determined stand she held them back during the crucial five minutes before the company of the South Staffordshire Regiment stationed in the town was able to send a platoon to save the hospital.

That happened some months before I first met her, but the story of the Scots' Sister's exploit greatly heartened many of us in lonely outposts. When she agreed to marry me I had to make a great decision. I remembered my father's advice at the outset of my career: that a mercenary should seek other employment once he becomes legally responsible for the maintenance of another man's daughter. He was right. I had seen too much of the soul-searing shifts and evasions to which our own married officers were often forced by fear of "redundancy". There was an even more important point—if I was married and had a family living in my divisional headquarters, I should no longer be free to prosecute my differences of opinion with the Arabs of my district—a man who wagers his head as his stake in the game can afford no hostages to fortune.

Janet returned to Scotland and I was soon spending a lot of my time in Nablus Hospital with malaria picked up in the marshes of Tulkarm division which I commanded, an area that ran from Caesarea's ruins in the north to Castle Mirabel at Antipatris at the head of the Auja River which flows down to Arsuf, Richard Lionheart's greatest battlefield in the south. It was bounded easterly by the road under the shattered remains of Ahab's palace on the Hill of Samaria, and the Mediterranean's beaches towards the sunset—a big and evil district inhabited mainly by descendants of Samaritan apostates to Islam, which I held with the aid of one Palestinian officer, a corporal, four British mounted constables, and eighteen Palestinian troopers. When I saw Tulkarm at the end of the Thirty Years' Crusade it was divided into three divisions, had 250 British police, 950 Palestinian and just over 2000 Special Constabulary, and was far more lawless than ever it had been in my day!

I had little choice about leaving Palestine. An Arab sergeant of mine was too zealous in his pursuit of a gang of brigands who held the middle of Palestine in a reign of terror. The worthy, plucky N.C.O. made the sovereign mistake of not realizing that the old days of keeping the peace by personal prestige were gone for ever under the new Western ideas that had recently entered our administration. We were guilty by every single one of their regulations—we offended against the new laws because we believed that the extirpation of the brigands, and stopping the terror which they imposed on all decent people, was worth a supreme effort. I was not within

miles of Qalqiliéh when the sergeant was severe with certain associates of the brigands, and forced them to give information as to where the principals might be encountered. As a result, one windy, stormy, rainy day in January, we fought them, rifle to rifle, until sunset, when those who were still alive surrendered.

I refused to take disciplinary action against the Arab sergeant. I knew that he was wrong, technically, but if I had proceeded to punish him I should have lost the loyalty of my men and the control of Tulkarm. Consequently, I told the new and strange Inspector-General, since dead, what I thought of his methods, and I forcibly repeated my opinion to the new High Commissioner, Sir Arthur Wauchope, when he sent for me. Rotten with malaria and disgust, and anxious only to reach Janet, I did not care. I left, happy to go, but I returned many times to Palestine, a land which I must always love and serve if I can.

Janet married me when I returned to England and we settled down. I had one book published almost at once, two more were commissioned. Three English magazines paid me for regular articles and a great American periodical sent me back to Palestine to write some articles for it. When I returned another book or two was published and then a newspaper sent me out once more to the Middle East as a special correspondent. I went back once more in 1938 and visited most of Syria and Palestine.

During those eventful years I was sickened and saddened by all I saw in the Holy Land, and only too bitterly was I confirmed in my earlier belief that all was lost after the end of the first decade. There were new officials at Headquarters, it was true, but they were mainly professionals of the Colonial Service, skilled in Crown Colony Government but without an ounce of understanding of Palestine and the Palestinians. The problem had grown far larger and even more dangerous, but essentially it was still the same one—how to make Palestine fit to govern itself and yet remain a grateful associate of Britain. How to safeguard the Holy Places which, despite all materialism, are revered by the peoples of the world; how to safeguard Imperial strategical interests in this vital area; how to make sure that the black oil flowed freely to the Mediterranean and, most urgent of all, how to do justice to Arab, to Jew and to all the millions who revere Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

The police force had grown beyond all recognition; the Holy Land was an armed camp. The Arabs were in open and incessant revolt and I felt myself highly honoured when I was taken to the lairs of many of their militant leaders—and even more flattered when the Jews, too, treated me as

a friend and a brother. Haifa was become a great port, roads ran everywhere; new colonies and settlements had grown up all over Sharon and Armageddon; the coastal plain of Acre was drained and great oil refineries stood on the Kishon marshes. Everywhere was the proof of booming material prosperity and everything was bigger than it had been—including the prisons, which were jammed with inhabitants, and I also saw the barbed-wire fences of shameful concentration camps where people suspected, but not convicted, of political offences rotted in confinement. Crown Colony Government, a frightened Crown Colony Government, brooded like a scared and snarling hyena over the mountains, the valleys and the plains of that most unholy Holy and too-frequently Promised Land.

I was very well received but I was also sickened, for the senior officials made a great play to obtain my good word in publications, although they professed to abhor and despise all journalists and scribblers. I was told scandalous stories about their brother officers and their brother-officers' wives and I took no heed, except to feel that my strictures on the Government of the Holy Land were only too well-based.

There were some good men, excellent men, who understood and loved the land and who might have done great service if they had not been restrained by the dull, jealous mediocrity of their service. I would mention only a few of those who should rank with the great figures of the mediaeval kingdom of Crusading Jerusalem. Lord Samuel, Field Marshal Lord Plumer, the two Kirkbrides, Foote, Peake, the founder of the Arab Legion and his successor, Glubb, James Munro of the British Police, Stokes and Jerry Masson the Australians, Patrick Golden an Irishman who died in Palestine as did J. C. Martin, Miss Berry of Nazareth, Reynolds of St. George's School, General Cunningham, the last High Commissioner, Bishop MacInnes of Jerusalem, with all of his cathedral clergy, Moshe Shertok, Eliash, Kisch, Bengurion and Hanken of the Jewish Agency, King Abdullah, Sheikh Mitghal Pasha el Faiz of the Beni Sakhr, Haj Amin el Husseini Mufti of Jerusalem, burly Friar Eugene, the Irish Franciscan of Gethsemane, along with his colleague Friar Godfrey Hunt, on whose gallant soul be eternal peace, the Archimandrite Kyriakos, Greek Orthodox Abbot of the Holy Sepulchre, with Abuna Yacoub the Assyrian to bear them company.

Then, in 1940, after being in Crete, where I was a prisoner for five days, in Greece and the Western Desert, I was sent to Palestine by my Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham, on whose staff I was a Lieutenant-Commander. Consequently, I was on a far different footing than I

had ever known before, for now I was neither a journalist nor a comparatively junior police official, but an Imperial officer with no reason to be subservient to anyone in the Palestine Government. Moreover, I was on "Special Duty", and I was answerable only to the flagship in Alexandria. My orders were "to make myself useful" and I proceeded to do so.

Most of my time was spent in Vichy-held Syria, where I moved about as a priest of the Orthodox Church with travelling-papers which said that I was on my way to do canonical penance at Mount Athos and Patmos, for the sins of adultery I had consistently and frequently committed with my own parishioners. The fantastic nonsense served me well, for ribald Gendarmerie *sous-officers* guffawed when they read my papers, looked at my patriarchal beard and did not go too deeply into my credentials. Syria was filled with German "tourists", soldiers from Crete, wearing plain clothes and my job was to counter their movements. With the aid of a small party of men I had known for years, Druzes, Kurds, Arabs, Greeks and Syrians, I did what I was sent to do. Britain crushed the French in Syria, reduced them to humiliating impotence, removed them under escort and some of our own people were fools enough to believe that we had done well. They did not foresee that, less than eighty months after destroying French authority, we should ourselves be scuttling from the shores of the Eastern Mediterranean in conditions of even greater shame.

When I was serving as First Lieutenant in Tobruk and Naval-Officer-in-Charge at Derna, and still more while I commanded the schooners which ran the stores to besieged Tobruk later on, I often saw the gallant little Palestinian ships which worked with us, manned entirely by Jews, filling their holds with Italian weapons taken from the dumps of booty about which no one cared. Those little ships always returned to Alexandria with empty holds; their secret cargoes were put quietly ashore on a remote Palestine beach before turning south. The Palestine Government refused to credit what I saw and reported, and it sat on in Jerusalem, in sublime and confident optimism that the utter peace of the war years in the Holy Land would be continued after V-Day.

There are so many things to which one can point as causes of our feeble failure. One is the careless fashion in which radio propaganda was executed in the late 'thirties, when the Italians kept the village Arabs supplied with good sets and freshly-charged batteries, while the Palestine Government, after the convulsive effort of issuing sets at all, made little pretence of servicing them. The Italians had their efficient sets firmly locked on one Fascist station; they were not going to pay for British views being heard by

their protégés. They were careful also to give their talks in the vernaculars of Palestine and to mix in a lot of local items. The Palestine Government mainly relied on B.B.C. talks, mostly given in the hard, and scarcely understood, accent of Egypt—with the result that, even had the sets been maintained as well as the Fascists did theirs, few Arab hillmen would have allowed themselves to be bored with those unattractive British programmes, unrelieved declarations of naught but sober truths; truisms can be most infinitely unattractive.

All these matters have been dealt with in a spate of books on Palestine. I know of the economic and political facts, of the sad shame of contradictory promises to Jew and Arab, of the impact of Hitler and Mussolini on the Jews of Europe and of Britain's own increasing embarrassments and difficulties. These are outside the scope of the present work, which, as I have said, is to tell the simple story of a man, honoured beyond his worth, who was blessed with the privilege of filling the same saddle as did a Blackmantle Hospitaller of yore.

THE HEIRS

WE have two heirs in Palestine who inherit all of good and evil that we wrought in the Thirty Years' Crusade, and, like many heirs, they are bitter in their mutual wrangling.

The State of Israel and the Hashimite kingdom of Jordan now fill the seats of authority vacated by Britain; it is of interest to consider their prospects of succeeding where we failed. To assess the facts of their position but to leave others to draw the conclusions. If history be a case-book of man's experiments, then it, too, may form some guide as to what may happen if the present Lords of Outremer repeat the errors of their many predecessors.

The parallels between the State of Israel and the Crusading kingdom of 1099 to 1291 are startling:

(a) In 1099 Islam was split just as widely and disastrously within itself, as it was in 1948.

(b) Because of this schism both States were instituted by a comparatively small number of hard-fighting zealots, far outnumbered by the Muslim around them.

(c) The Latin kingdom held an unstrategic strip of coastline; Israel, being much smaller and more exposed, pinched between the mountains and the Mediterranean, is even less secure.

(d) Both Israel and the Crusader's Land are indefensible without continuous reinforcement and replenishment from the West. Unless newcomers and fresh wealth arrive in steady succession, Israel can be no more permanent than was the mediaeval Kingdom of the Cross.

(e) The Second and later generations of Crusading Franks, those born in Palestine, owned what little land was available, and resented newcomers anxious to settle. The Sabras, the same type, Jews born in the Palestinian colonies, are no more eager to be crowded out, although they realize, as fully as did their predecessors, that without recruitment their enterprise must wilt.

(f) Like the Crusaders the Israelis profess a creed which is anathema to their fanatical Muslim neighbours, who may, when Islam becomes more

united, raise once more the Counter-Crusade by invoking the innate fanaticism of their peoples.

(g) There are intense internal rivalries in Israel, every whit as bitter as those between the great feudatories of the Kingdom or the feuds between the Orders which led to its fall. It must be remembered, however, that Jews have shown, time and again, that they can lock their ranks against a common enemy, just as they did when Titus besieged Jerusalem while its streets ran red with Jews' blood shed in factionary and fratricidal strife.

There are dangers in Israel which are peculiar to itself. Among them is the growing difference between the people of the State of Israel and Jews who continue to live in their own countries. Israelis are inclined to look on themselves as the only worthwhile Jews and to consider their fellow-religionists beyond its frontiers as lacking in devotion, even though there cannot be room in Israel for a tithe of world-Jewry. This is an involved and difficult problem and reaches back to the fundamental controversy as to whether Jewry is a race, a political nationality, or a Church. Jews of England, America and elsewhere rightly consider themselves to be just as much Englishmen, or Americans, or Frenchmen, as are their fellow-countrymen professing to be Baptists, Catholics, Anglicans, Presbyterians or any other creed. This vital question of inherent loyalties must be solved sooner or later, and the decision of the frontiers between duties to God and to Caesar will not be a simple one. It is liable to lead to a cooling-off of enthusiasm for Israel, as fatal as was the similar coldness towards Jerusalem in the thirteenth century shown by the Christian peoples of the West.

The problem of Israel's difficult land frontiers, allied to her economic and social difficulties, to her internal inflation, high cost of living and very large population makes smuggling a very attractive proposition. To repress it, Israel will need to use stern methods, which must lead to "incidents" between frontier guards and Arab smugglers that may cause chronic guerilla warfare.

Israel, too, is subject to disaster through political shifts in countries over which she has no control. A new war might easily destroy her. She is also very susceptible to persecutions of the relatives of her citizens who still reside in other countries, and which may lead her into serious conflict. The whole question of the status of Jews enters into this—for, if Israel ever considers herself the Protector of all Jewry, she will need to have far greater military resources than she now possesses.

Again, while Israel remains dependent on charitable contributions from other countries, or from the Jewish people in those lands, she can scarcely be

truly independent. This has already been shown, in some degree, by the growing dissatisfaction between some of the American Jewish Funds and the Israel Government over the question of the status of these funds, and their right to have a voice in the political and economic development of the Holy Land.

Sooner or later, Israel must either restrict her proud boast of free immigration for all Jews, or else expand her territory. To do this latter means either defiance of the United Nations or war with her neighbours; probably both.

There is one last sad parallel between Crusaders and Israelis in that both started their rule with a savage massacre. The slaughter of the Arab peasants at Deir Yassin, a village in the Judean Hills, four miles from Jerusalem, is a debt of blood that will be held fiercely by the Arabs for all time. Just as the Crusading kingdom never healed the breach made by the slaughter in Jerusalem on the day they first took the city, so the blood shed in the Palestine village in 1948 may yet prove the bane of Israel.

There are not sufficient raw materials in Israel for her to set up manufactures which will support her large population and, so far as is known, none exist, bar the chemicals of the Dead Sea, which is almost entirely outside Israeli territory, some sulphur in the Negeb, and the citrus plantations. It may be that Israel will be able to emulate Switzerland and use the innate skills and willingness of her people to export finished goods manufactured from imported raw materials.

While the hatred of Israel's neighbours keeps alive their thirst for vengeance, the cost of defensive armaments must be crushing. Whether the courage, devotion, skill and idealism of her people can carry her through is a question that only time can answer.

Our other heir is the Hashimite kingdom of Jordan, which, in many ways, is even more shaky than Israel, for it has not that State's devoted populace, nor the sense of loyalty to an ideal or even of being a united people.

The Hashimite kingdom is, essentially, a British construction erected and maintained by Britain, with very little life of its own. It was part of the Ottoman provinces before 1918, when the son of the Sherif Hussein of Mecca was selected as its Emir under British Mandate. Its people then consisted of a few townsmen in small towns like Amman, Irbid, Es Salt and some large villages, but the vast majority were nomadic, or semi-nomadic, Bedouin of the desert, loosely organized into confederations of small clans ruled, vaguely, by Paramount Sheikhs.

Many of the greater Paramount Sheikhs resented the intrusion of an Outlander Prince upon them, but they quietened down as the late King Abdullah, amply backed by British arms, finance and advisers, gradually won effective control. His late Majesty was a clever, honest and likeable man but his rule hinged entirely upon his own brave and engaging personality, as it so often does in Oriental principalities. He was always careful to stress the fact that he, too, was an Arab chieftain and he usually wore Bedouin dress. He had great prestige, too, as being of the Blood of the Prophet, a Sherif, a member of the Koreish Tribe of which the Prophet was also a son. Until the outbreak of the Second War the British officials in Transjordan, as the territory was then called, were outstanding for their excellence, their tact, their courage and their ability to be the unseen, and so unresented power behind the Emir. British officers and troops were seldom seen in the country outside Amman and the base at Zerka, and they took pains to be as inconspicuous as possible. It should be said that none of the strictures which I have applied to the Government of Palestine's Civil Service are true about the handful of devoted Britons who served in Transjordan. With the coming of the Second War, however, this was all changed—the Arab Legion grew until it became very much like an old-fashioned Indian Army formation. British officers, often mediocre ones, became common, there were British troops everywhere, and with increasing quantity, quality declined sharply.

Even so that would not have mattered so much, for, with the coming of peace, these extra Britons might have been withdrawn and the comfortable and efficient obscurity resumed. But with the British expulsion from Palestine, Transjordan became vital to us—we had treaties with the Emir which gave us a pretext for remaining east of the River Jordan. Eventually this led to the strange and pitiful anomaly that British officers were directing the war against Israel. British officers commanded the batteries which shelled Jerusalem, and British arms and equipment were in the hands of the Muslim attacking the Holy Land (or defending it, whichever viewpoint one wishes to take)—a strange anticlimax upon which historians of the future will doubtlessly comment.

But none of these things are so important to the future of Jordan as the fact that the Emir Abdullah became King of Jordan—a country composed of his original principality and also of all Palestine-west-of-the-Jordan that could be saved from the Jews. At one stroke big Muslim towns, like Nablus, Old Jerusalem, Hebron, Tulkarm, Jenin and hundreds of hill villages where a settled peasantry had lived for two-score centuries at least, in addition to

swarms of pauperized refugees from Jaffa, Haifa, Acre, Gaza and elsewhere, became equal citizens with the Bedouin who had been the King's subjects ever since he was first inducted by Britain to his throne in Amman.

The patriarchal government of Transjordan is no longer suitable to semi-urbanized Jordan. Thousands of educated men, literates, clever politicians and terrorists, accustomed to dealing with Westerners, came under the Bedouin crown and they do not like it. Before long that very great gentleman, King Abdullah, was shot down by Palestinian assassins in the Holy House of El Akhsa in Jerusalem, in the sacred Temple area, the Haram esh Sherif. With him died England's greatest friend in the Middle East.

These new Jordanians hate Britain almost as much as they detest and loathe the Jews. They blame, with good reason, the exile, deaths of thousands of their fellow-religionists and countrymen, the loss of their lands and towns, on Britain. With one accord they wish to rid themselves of her. Yet, if they do so, Jordan must collapse. Without the protection which Britain still can afford her; without the British subsidy; without British arms and British officers, Hashimite Jordan would collapse instantly in front of the Israel pressure. Even union with the other Hashimite kingdom of Iraq could only delay the end—not prevent it.

The three decades during which the flag of Britain rustled in the hot suns of Palestinian summer and the cold blasts of a Jerusalem winter are gone, and with them has fled much of our honour. The saddest commentary on what we did, or, even more exactly, on what we failed to do, was spoken by an Arab refugee when I was recently in the Middle East, making my sixth Outganging to the Land of Outremer. I had known this Muslim gentleman when he was the head of a wealthy, respectable, honourable family living on its own land in the hills of Galilee.

"Why did you Franks ever come to our country to ruin us and to leave us to die in exile?" he asked. "Why could you not have left us to the Turks? Under the Sultan we had, at least, security to live on our own land, under our own religion and without fear of infidel supplanters. Why did you lie to us, buoy us with false hopes, make yourselves foesworn? May God punish your England in the same fashion as He has permitted you of Britain to be the instruments to undo my people! May you, too, know exile, the breaking up of families, hunger, destitution, violent death, and see your homes in the grasp of a trespasser, your women and children dead at your feet before you die yourselves!"

As for myself, I carried home from the fabled Land of Outremer the

noblest trophy that any man returning from it has ever brought—Janet, my wife, whom first I saw on Nazareth's hill so many years ago.

From her have sprung my two daughters, Jean-Mary and Janet-Eve. May the Lord God make them, with our help, into women as worthy of the name of woman as is their kindly, gallant mother!

*"Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth
my hands to war, and my fingers to fight".*

Ps. cxliv, 1.

*"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let
my right hand forget her cunning."*

Ps. cxxxvii, 5.

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